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DAYBREAK IN KOREA



POBAI ON HER WAY TO CHURCH

Daybreak in Korea

A Tale of Transformation
in the Far East

BY

ANNIE L. A. BAIRD

Missionary of the American Presbyterian Board



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PREFACE

THE contents of the following pages are little more than a compilation and rearrangement of facts and incidents such as come daily under the observation of missionaries in Korea.

To understand something of the utter degradation of a Christless world, one need go no further than the first chapter of Romans. Yet as the missionary comes into heart-touch with his people, he sees in them continual proofs of the Divine Author. He finds them richly endowed with capacity for high ideals and sacrifice of self, with power to love, to hate, to enjoy, to suffer, and to endure. Poetry and fire form part of their intellectual portion. Everywhere are masses of noble material, wasted and misused to an incredible extent, and yet capable, under the transforming power of the Gospel, of resuming something of its first God-like character.

“He hath made of one blood all the nations of men,” and if the reader is brought to see that these people are of blood-kin to himself, a prey to the same hopes and fears, responding as readily to the touch of the great Healer of soul-diseases, the purpose of the writer will have been accomplished.

PYENG YANG, KOREA.



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DAYBREAK IN KOREA

I

AN UNWILLING BRIDE

GRANDFATHER KIM sat out under the wide eaves on the sunny side of the house, weaving the autumn supply of straw shoes for the family. It was summertime, but Grandfather Kim was old and his blood ran slow, and so he sat in the sun. Long practice had made him deft at his work, and as his stubby old fingers twisted the straw in and out, his gaze wandered continually to the range of low hills that faced his dwelling. They were covered to the very top with low green mounds, some evidently very old, and sunk almost out of sight. Others were more recent, and one or two were not yet grass-clad, and showed the fresh marks of the spade.

As the old man wove he looked, and as he looked he crooned:

“Humps and hollows, just look at that hillside !
I’ll be like that, too, when once I have died.”

Over and over again went the refrain in a round that seemed to have neither beginning nor end.

Pobai drew near and sat down on the mat beside her grandfather, an attempt at ease which was resented so vigorously by the fat baby tied on her back, that she got up again and readjusted her burden rather wearily. She was nearly twelve years old, with round cheeks that glowed red under the olive skin, and a heavy braid of glossy black hair hanging down her back. Only perfect cleanliness was lacking to make her a very wholesome little girl to look upon, but Pobai was almost always rather dirty. She would have liked to be clean, but so much of her time and strength went into helping her mother keep the men of the family immaculately clad, that she hardly ever had time to think of herself. Only last night she and her mother had sat up until long after midnight, facing each other across the flat ironing-stone and pounding away with the ironing-sticks, so that her father might have a freshly ironed suit in which to go to the fair. They had felt very proud of him as they watched him, stiffly starched and spotless, picking his way through the heaps of filth that lined the road with the air of a gentleman of leisure. But now her head ached a little, and the baby seemed unusually heavy.

"Tell me a story, grandfather," she said.

"Tell you a story, Pobai? What kind of a story do you want?"

"Oh, anything, grandfather; only something different from what you've been singing."



HOW WOMEN CARRY BABIES IN KOREA

“Something different from what I’ve been singing? Well, if you don’t want to hear about one kind of a taisa [important affair] I’ll tell you a story about another. Have I ever told you about the courtship of Mr. Earthworm and Miss Thousandlegs? Well, once upon a time there was a gentleman named Mr. Earthworm who had a very long body, longer than any one else in the village, so long, in fact, that it took a small fortune to clothe him, so that he had to go naked most of the time. Well, one day when twice eight green springs had passed over his head, he looked about him and saw everybody else paired off, going around in couples, two by two, so he determined to seek a union with Miss Thousandlegs, a lady of a neighbouring village. Now Miss Thousandlegs was distinguished above all her friends and acquaintances by the number of her legs. There was no one else anywhere who had so many legs and feet as she, and it seemed very suitable that two such remarkable people should come together in marriage. Everything went along without a hitch, and Mr. Earthworm was looking forward to his wedding-day with many bright hopes, when one day a letter came from the lady, saying that she had been thinking the matter over, and had come to the conclusion that the task of making clothes for such a long man as he was, was too tiresome a business to look forward to for the rest of her life, and she wanted him to let her off from the contract. Mr.

Earthworm felt a good deal hurt for a while, but presently he wrote back that he was glad she had broken the match off, because, come to think about it, the job of weaving her shoes from year to year would keep him a good deal busier than the making of his clothes would her. So that was the end of it. You see, the mistake Miss Thousandlegs made was in dwelling on other people's defects instead of her own, and in trying to shirk her duty. So she has gone barefoot ever since, and been despised by everybody."

The little girl's merry laugh did not ring out as the old man had expected. Instead, she said soberly: "I don't like stories about getting married."

"Oh, you don't?" said the old man, looking at her downcast face sharply. "Well, now, let me tell you, Pobai, that the three great affairs of life,—birth, marriage, and death,—are all alike in one particular, and that is that you can't escape them. Got to come to it, you know, whether you like it or not."

"Oh, but must I, grandfather? Why must I?" cried the little girl, with a sudden burst of feeling. She came close up to the old man and stood by him, her little body breathless and trembling. "Why can't I stay at home and help with the work like I always have? You know how hard I work. And you, grandfather, who will bring your pipe and light it for you, and get straw

when you want it, and spread your mat for you in the sun, if I am gone?"

The old man let his work fall and looked at her. "Why, what good would you be, Pobai, if you don't get married? You would be no better than a pyungsin [deformity] or a tol-kei-chip [stone woman]."

"But not now, grandfather; by and by, when I get older," urged the little girl, desperately.

"Older? Why, you are already nearly twelve years old. I guess it's got to be before very long, Pobai. You know the money has already been paid for you, and your father needs it badly. Sooner or later it's got to be." He took up his work again and his gaze wandered off once more to the hillside. "Got to be, got to be," he crooned, rocking his body back and forth.

"Got to be, got to be,
Whether it's you or whether it's me."

That night when the sun was down, and the big baby asleep at last on the floor, Pobai started across the village to borrow a charcoal iron. Her spirits were heavy, and she went with dragging feet. The little mud-walled houses with roofs of straw and doors and windows of paper, juttied out on the street, if street it could be called, and crowds of little children, escaping from the close, hot rooms, swarmed in her path, skipping and dancing in the moonlight, and singing over and over a little song:

"Down falls the sun behind the west mountain ;
Up springs the moon from the side to the eastward."

In front of the doors as she went along, mats were spread and men were gambling. From behind one closed door came the sound of expostulations, the heavy thud of a club and shrieks. Then the door burst open, and a woman rushed out, her clothes torn from her, her heavy black hair hanging in dishevelled strands nearly to her knees. Hurtling through the air after her came a heavy stick. "Old man Wun is drunk again," thought Pobai.

In a lighted doorway Pobai saw a little girl no older than herself whom she knew very well. It was Shining Peachblossom. Times had been hard not long before, and the parents of Shining Peachblossom had combed her hair and dressed it carefully with oil and perfume, and arrayed her in silks and brocades, and sent her in to the magistracy to be a kesaing [dancing-girl].

Now she was back again, and Pobai saw that she was panting as if she had been running. Her face looked very wan and thin and unchildlike under the powder and paint, and Pobai heard her say: "Oh, if you'll just let me stay quietly at home, mother, you don't know how hard I will work. It's dreadful down where I am. I'm afraid, I'm afraid!" Pobai did not hear the answer, but presently there was the sound of a push, a little cry, the slam of a door, and looking back, she saw Shining Peachblossom

fallen a little crumpled heap by the side of the path.

Further on a terrible stench saluted her nostrils, and she quickened her pace. How much longer could the village endure it? In that wretched house to the right, the body of a dead man had lain for more than a month. He was a murderer and had been beaten to death by the magistrate's orders, and permission to bury the body refused. The villagers well knew what that meant. A large sum of money must be collected and paid to the magistrate to secure his consent to the interment, but they were all exceedingly poor, and so the festering corpse lay there day after day through the hot summer weather.

Presently as she turned homeward, her errand accomplished, the Whang brothers met her in the way. They were demon-possessed, and each had a bag on his breast suspended by a string around the neck, and filled with scraps of iron, pebbles, old straw shoes, and filthy rags. In these bags the demons dwelt, and as the men went along, bending half double under the weight, they were holding muffled conversation with their familiars.

As the child sped on with hastening footsteps, it seemed to her that all the vast areas of space between the little children dancing in the moonlight and singing their quaint song, up to the great shining moon herself, sailing so calmly

through the high heavens, must be filled with sin and suffering and sorrow and wrong. Grandfather's refrain:

"Got to be, got to be,
Whether it's you or whether it's me,"

rang dully in her ears, and she tried to steel her heart against the future. Yet, when she came to the gate of her home, she turned suddenly very sick and faint.

There in the doorway stood a coolie, evidently just arrived; on his back a large package. Pobai watched her mother open the package and take out, one after another, bolts of shimmering silks, brocades, and gauzes, some of dainty, evanescent tints, others deep hued as the rainbow. There were bolts of white muslin for plainer wear, and ornaments of wrought silver and coral for hair and breast. It was a pretty sight; yet the little girl in the shadow of the gate felt somehow unable to stand, and clutched at the gatepost for support. It had come, the present from the family of the bridegroom of goods, which the bride and her mother were expected to make into garments for herself and for the little boy husband whom she had never seen. Soon must follow the wedding and the home-going with these strange people, into a life of hard drudgery, with hardly ever a glimpse of her own father and mother, brothers and sisters, again.

Long after the coolie had gone away Pobai



POBAI'S CHILDHOOD HOME

still crouched against the gatepost, trying in her childish way to weigh and measure her future, and the possibility of being able to bear it, and it was not until her mother had come to the door several times and peered anxiously into the darkness that the little girl got slowly to her feet and made her way into the house.

"What made you so long?" asked the mother, sharply.

For answer the little girl sank down on the floor and turned her head away.

"I feel ill, mother," she said; "my head aches and I feel faint."

"Perhaps you didn't eat enough supper," said her mother, not unkindly. "But here's something that will make you feel all right. Just look at these beautiful pieces of goods. Not a bit too good, though. They ought to pay well for what they're getting. The things haven't come any too soon. We'll have to work hard to get everything ready in time."

Pobai's heart sank very low, and she could hardly find breath to ask, "When is it to be, mother?"

"Six weeks from to-day is a lucky day, Blind Man E says, and the only lucky day for three months, so it'll have to be then."

Pobai lay very still on the floor while her mother bustled around, putting the bolts of goods away. Presently her father and brothers came in and smoked their evening pipes. Then they,

too, sprawled out on the floor for the night, and all was still. After what seemed to Pobai a long, long time she fell asleep, and did not wake until she heard her mother scraping the embers together in the kitchen fireplace. Ordinarily she sprang to her feet and was on hand to help with the work, doing often the larger share, but this morning, and the next, and the next, she lay still on the floor with her face turned to the wall, eating hardly anything, and saying in response to all inquiries, "Please let me be. My head aches and I feel faint."

Her father and mother looked at each other, and formed the words "Kwun pyung" [feigned illness] with their lips. They bore with her until the fourth day, and then her mother came in and took her by the hand and said:

"Come, Pobai, it's no use. You have to be ready when the time comes, and I can't do it all myself. Get up, dear. I know it's hard, but it's the way of the world. I was glad when you were born, after the two boys, and that was why I called you Pobai [Treasure], and you've always been a treasure to me, but all the time I knew that the years would fly by like a spring dream and the day would come, all too soon, when we would have to part. Now it is nearly here, and you will have to be ready for it. It's a hard world, my child, very hard, but we have it to bear. Maybe you'll be born a man in the next world, who knows? I suppose you'll have

to be if you get in at all. Well, what shall we begin with? A pair of trousers for him? I'll cut them out, and you can quilt them with your closest and finest stitches. I don't want his folks to have any reason to say that you have not been well brought up."

So Pobai took her first great lesson in the doctrine of hopeless resignation to the inevitable, which her mother and countless generations of grandmothers before her had learned and practised with varying degrees of success. Day after day and till late at night she sat and stitched and stitched, until her fingers were as numb as her heart, and daily the pile of pretty garments grew. Then came days of preparation for the feast. Heaps on heaps of rice-flour bread, made in a great mass, and pounded with a big wooden mallet on a huge stone until it had reached the proper degree of toughness; stacks of rich, brown oil-cakes, made of honey, wheat-flour, oil, and ground sesame seed; bowls and bowls of buckwheat vermicelli, mixed with dogmeat, and sprinkled liberally with red pepper; more bowls full of sliced turnips covered with brine and also very hot with pepper; platters of parched rice pressed into cakes and colored a bright red; whole sides of scrawny pork, and chickens boiled whole—such were some of the good things that Pobai and her mother worked hard to prepare.

On the day of the ceremonial feast Pobai sat as motionless as Buddha in the centre of the

floor, the dusky rose of her cheeks covered with thick white and red paint, her head adorned with a great quantity of false hair, which was stuck full of heavy silver, brass, and coral ornaments, the whole surmounted by a crown of red and gold paper. Her chokeri, a short jacket reaching a little below the armpits, was of bright green silk, and her skirt was of red silk gauze over blue. From her girdle hung a heavy bunch of ornaments of wrought silver, coral, and jade, conspicuous among them a mounted tiger's claw. Her eyes were cast down, and through all the hubbub of people coming and going, and pressing close upon her, of constant audible comments, favorable and otherwise, she never moved a muscle, or seemed either to see or hear. At intervals one and another of the group of bridesmaids who surrounded her lifted the huge mass of hair and metal slightly from her head, and afforded her a moment's relief from its weight.

Outside the door, on a large mat, and shaded by a light awning, the feast was spread, and a host of neighbours, friends, and relatives came and went, helping themselves at their pleasure. Pobai's father was in evidence, playing the host with a good deal of elegance, but her mother hardly emerged from the kitchen. She had on her oldest and dirtiest clothes, and her hair had certainly not been combed for several days. Why should one rejoice and don gay apparel on the occasion of losing a daughter?

By and by, after long waiting, the bridegroom appeared, attended by several friends and relatives. He was a little fellow about ten years old, gorgeously attired in a long coat of purple and green silk brocade, with a winged horsehair cap on his head, and a square of beautifully embroidered Chinese characters, signifying long life and happiness, fastened to his back. He was far too sulky and shy, even if he had not been indifferent, to cast so much as a glance toward the little bride, and it was only after much pulling and pushing and prompting from all sides, that the little pair were got into position, facing each other across a mat with a low table between them, upon which was placed a wooden goose—the type of conjugal fidelity—and the ancestral tablets of the two families. Then followed various genuflections and prostrations to each other, to the ancestral tablets, and to heaven. Pobai went through it all in a sort of dull maze. The old grandfather had taken up his station near her, and at intervals during the ceremony Pobai heard, or thought she heard, him crooning low to himself his improvised dirge:

“Got to be, got to be,
Whether it's you, or whether it's me.”

At last, after what seemed a long time, the ceremony came to an end, the imposing array of

good things was reduced to a few scattered fragments, the scraggy little pony, which had brought the bridegroom, stood saddled and bridled, awaiting its rider, and the bearers of the sedan chair, which was to carry away the little bride, were clamouring to be off. Pobai was conscious of being hurried into the chair and packed in closely all around with the articles of her wedding trousseau. She caught a glimpse of her mother's bent shoulders in the kitchen, then she was picked up and carried jogging away after the strange boy who had become her husband. Hour after hour they travelled, with occasional stops for rest and refreshment, and it was long afternoon of the second day when they arrived at the bridegroom's home in the village of Cho Wangi [Royal Helpfulness] and she saw her new relatives for the first time. Here another great feast was spread, and here again she sat motionless for hours, the centre of all eyes. It was late at night when the last guest departed. The little bridegroom was already sound asleep, finery and all, at one side of the room.

"Get off your things and get to sleep," said her mother-in-law. "There's a lot of work to do to-morrow, and you'll have to get up early."

Thus Pobai's married life began, only one of many faltering little barks that set sail on unknown seas in lands where tender mercies are cruel.



A WATER CARRIER

II

WIFE, MOTHER, WIDOW, SLAVE

DAYS and weeks and months and years wore slowly by. If merely being busy could have satisfied her woman's heart, Pobai would have felt no lack, for from early morning until late at night she seldom had a moment of leisure. Every drop of water that was used in the house she brought from the river, more than a quarter of a mile away, carrying it in an earthenware jar on her head. Often at two o'clock in the morning the heavy thump, thump, thump of the big wooden rice-huller was heard, and the patient foot that released the bar for every thump was Pobai's. Over and over again midnight found her pounding away on the ironing-stone in order that her husband or her father-in-law might walk abroad the next day clad in fresh garments of white linen, smooth and glistening. Sometimes the moon shone down on her late at night as she sat at the riverside with the family washing spread out on a large stone, alternately pounding, rinsing, and turning. This washing at the riverside was not so hard in the summer, but in the winter when



she had to break the ice with her pounding-stick and dip the garments in and out of the freezing current, she often suffered bitterly, and more than once, when the ice banks began to take on lovely hues of rose and violet, and the piled up hummocks of snow seemed to turn into downy couches, warm and alluring, she had gathered herself together with an effort and hastened home to keep from freezing to death.

When the mild spring days came she hurried through the housework and went into the field, where she sowed and transplanted, weeded and hoed. With the late summer and fall came the harvest, and she helped to winnow and put away the grain. Then came the making of "kimchi," the staple pickle of the country, and Pobai pared and sliced bushels of turnips and put them up in prepared brine in great brown earthenware jars nearly as tall as herself, and of much ampler proportions as to girth. In the winter she spun hanks on hanks of cotton thread and wove it into bolts of goods, sitting hour after hour at the heavy loom, until her weary feet and back almost refused to make another move.

All day long and from year's end to year's end she wrought, through the bright years of her girlhood, and got in return something to wear, a scanty two meals of food a day, and a place to sleep at night. Her parents-in-law were not cruel, as many were, only hard and indifferent. She had never cared much for her husband, or

he for her, and he paid her very little attention except to complain when his clothes were not washed and ironed properly, or his food not prepared to his liking. He was considered one of the promising boys of the village, and went every day to a Confucian school at the end of the town. Pobai passed it regularly on her way to the river, and sometimes caught a glimpse of the old teacher, sitting cross-legged at the far end of the room, quite awful with his long white beard, his huge black goggles, and the bundles of switches hanging on the wall behind him. In front of him, with the other urchins, sat her husband, rocking back and forth and shouting the names of the Chinese characters at the top of his voice. Sometimes husband and wife passed each other on the street, but without a sign of recognition. He would have died rather than to have appeared to know her; and if any one had been rude enough to have asked Pobai in those days what her husband's name was, she would have blushed and hung her head, and intimated that she hardly knew.

Once when she was about fifteen years old, it occurred to Pobai that she would like to learn to read. She revolved the matter a long time in her mind before she gathered courage to speak, but one day when her mother-in-law was out, and she and her husband were alone in the house, she ventured to prefer her request. Her husband was sitting on the floor with his book

spread out before him, inscribing imaginary characters on the palm of one hand with the forefinger of the other. He finished the last character with an elaborate flourish before he answered her.

"Want to learn to read?" he said, with a scornful laugh. "When water begins to run uphill, it'll be worth while to try to teach you anything."

"Oh, I don't mean Chinese," Pobai answered, flushing; "of course, I could never learn that. But just our own native character, I thought, perhaps——"

But her husband had turned again to the study of cabalistic designs on his palm, and did not look up, and Pobai slipped back again to the kitchen with its dirt floor and rafters hanging with cobwebs and soot.

When she was eighteen years old her baby was born. The advent of the little one had been awaited impatiently by the grandparents, and with good reason. Heretofore all the grandchildren born into the family had been girls. The old people were getting up in years, and if they should die without the assurance of continued male posterity, their shades would have no rest, and the family would be under a curse.

So it was important that a boy should be born, and Pobai was more anxious than any one else. What little happiness she knew, and any earthly

honour that she could hope to attain, depended upon her becoming the mother of a son.

When the hour of her trial arrived, her husband donned his best raiment, took his long pipe, and went with his usual deliberate step to the sarang [reception room] of a neighbouring gentleman. Doubtless if he thought of anything as he went along, his mind revolved around the Confucian precept, conned over and over at school, to the effect that any one who allowed himself to be swerved in the least from his usual course by any consideration of wife or child, was undeserving of the name of man. When evening came he betook himself to his home. His mother met him at the door with a gloomy face.

"It was all for nothing," she said.

He stared at her a moment, as if to make sure of the disagreeable truth, and then his calmness forsook him. Taking his long-stemmed pipe in both hands, he broke it into half a dozen bits and ground them into the earth with his heel, then turned and disappeared in the twilight. It was more than a week before the household saw him again.

But for Pobai the coming of the little stranger, unwelcome though she had been, stirred the first great passion of her life. Oh, the comfort and satisfaction! Oh, the utter richness and sweetness of it, as she held the baby girl in her arms, and fed her from her breast, and watched the

tiny fingers unfold, and the long sweep of the lashes against the cheek, and listened for the balmy breath that came and went like the lightest summer zephyr. Skies of East or West, skins of brown or white, mother hearts beat to the same tune the world over, and Pobai grew bold with love.

She was up again in a few days; there was too much work to be done for the mother of a girl to lie long abed, and when her husband put in his appearance again she held the baby out to him.

"See how sweet she is," she said. "What shall we call her?"

"Call her anything you like," he answered, turning away. "Call her Supsuphi [Regretfully] or Meephi [Hateful]—only don't bother me with it."

So Pobai gathered her little daughter to her bosom, and called her Kwehi [Precious], and loved her with the love of both father and mother.

When the baby was about six months old, and the hills and plains were covered deep with winter snows, the boy-father came home one evening complaining of a pain in his side. He could not lie down with comfort, but sat up all night and until next evening. Then saying that he felt better, he attempted to rise to his feet, fell back, gasped once or twice, and died.

Here was calamity. He had not cared for his

wife, but had afforded her protection and a home. Now sullen looks were cast at her as she went about her work with affected composure. The older brother would move in now with his family, and there would be no room for Pobai and her little girl. The family held whispered consultations, and she caught the words, "Pretty yet," "A good price," and she knew the danger. They would sell her to whomever would give the money and take her away.

Pobai's wits were hard at work as she bent over the huge rice-pot or scoured the brass bowls until they shone again, but no way out opened up to her. In her old home the mother was dead and another woman in her place. Old grandfather was long in his dotage, her two brothers had brought their wives home, and the house was more than full. Even if there had been any hope of a welcome there, she had no way of getting any word to them.

But now a rumour reached her that drove all thoughts of self away, and filled her with palpitating terror for her baby. Her nearest neighbour whispered it to her one morning at the door.

"The Sonnim [guest] has come!"

The sonnim! The dreadful guest who brought with him nausea and burning fever, bursting pain of head and back, and loathsome sores on face and body; who took his pitiless way through every household where there were little children, leaving behind him, so often, only

silence where the sound of baby voices and the patter of little feet had been.

The two women looked at each other in silence. Her neighbour was older, the mother of five, although she only counted the three older ones, because the two younger ones had not yet been visited by the Sonnim.

"We can wait and see whether or not he is going to be easily satisfied," she said, finally, "and if not, we can try some charms."

Two nights later she came to the door, and calling Pobai out, whispered in her ear: "The two Wang children are dead and the Han baby."

"Oh, what can we do?" was the whisper in return.

"Sh-h! He may hear. Maybe we can fool him. To-night at midnight I will bring our children to the dog-hole in our gate. You be there and take them and keep them till morning, and then if he comes in the night and finds our house empty, it may be that he will pass on. The next night you bring your baby and hand it through to me, and I will do the same for you."

It was done, yet a few days later the children of both households lay tossing and moaning, hot with fever and muttering incoherent sounds.

Pobai tried every art she knew. She made a rude horse of straw and placed it outside the gate, in the hope that the evil spirit might be induced to mount and ride away. Then when

the hideous sores broke out on baby's tender face and breast, she knelt before her in pretended admiration.

"See the pretty flowers! See the beautiful blossoms!" she cried, shudderingly. But the implacable spirit heeded not, and baby grew worse hour by hour.

The neighbour's children were worse too, and when night came the two women slipped away to see old Sim Ssi, the moodang [sorceress].

They found the old woman brewing a decoction over a little iron brazier full of glowing charcoal, the only light in the room. As they went in, she was cutting up with great care a few shreds of meat from the carcass of a yellow dog. This she added to the brew. Then she reached up to a shelf above her head and took down two small packages. One contained the eyebrows of a tiger, and these she clipped fine and put into the pot. The other contained the dried bodies of half a dozen purple and gold beetles, gathered without the touch of hand, on a summer morning when the dew was heavy. These she took up carefully with a pair of small silver tweezers and added to the mixture. As she bent over the fire the shadow of her nose was thrown up against her forehead, making her look like a sort of grim unicorn. Her face was crossed and recrossed with deep seams, and one yellow tooth protruded from her mouth and rested upon her lip.

Presently, when the brew seemed to be mixed to her satisfaction, she looked up and addressed her visitors.

"What's wanted?" she asked, briefly.

"The Sonnim," both women responded in a breath.

"The Sonnim! I thought so," with a short laugh. "I know him and he knows me. Well, what about it?"

"We want you to come and drive him away," they answered tremblingly.

For answer the old woman opened a box in the corner of the room and took out what seemed to be the dried carcass of a small animal. She laid it across her knees and stabbed it repeatedly with a sharp piece of bamboo. As she did so, a squealing sound was heard, emanating, apparently, from the carcass.

"There's life there," the old woman said emphatically. "Your children can be saved."

There was a long silence in the room before the women ventured to ask, "How much will it take?"

"More than you've got, likely," was the answer.

"Will one hundred yang [five dollars] be enough?" asked the neighbour woman, hesitatingly.

"Maybe—to begin on. And you?" turning to where Pobai stood in the semi-darkness.

Alas, poor Pobai! She had not a cash in the

world. Her silence told the story, and the old woman laughed again.

"Strapped, eh? This is a poor place to come to without money." Then, as Pobai still said nothing, she added with apparent irrelevance: "My supply of fuel is getting low."

Still Pobai made no reply, and the old woman added, as she peered into the pot bubbling over the fire: "That's a fine-looking stack of straw that you have in your front yard."

"But it isn't mine," stammered Pobai.

"It doesn't need to be. You bring it to me and it'll be mine," said the old woman, coolly.

"But how can I? They'll see me."

"It's broad noon all the day round at your house, is it?" retorted the old woman. "Use your wits, if you've got any, and bring me that straw between now and daylight, if you want anything done for your child. I can't come to either place before that time, anyway, and whether I come to your place at all depends on how you put in the time between now and then."

She took the pot off the fire and began pouring the mixture into a row of little white bowls. Evidently the interview was over, and the two women hurried homeward over the frozen road.

Pobai found little "Precious" lying as she had left her, on the floor, but a change had surely taken place during the mother's brief absence. She was not moaning and tossing now, but seemed to be resting quietly, and as her mother

entered she raised her swollen lids with what was certainly a glance of recognition. Maybe, oh, maybe the evil spirit knew already that Sim Ssi was coming to drive him away, and was beginning to take his departure in anticipation. She put her breast to the baby's mouth and pressed a few drops of nourishment into the little throat, almost too sore and swollen to swallow. Again baby looked into her mother's face, and lifted her hand for the first time since the evil Guest had come, and laid it on her mother's breast. When she was put down again on the floor she fell at once into a restful sleep.

Pobai rose stealthily to her feet and looked about her. Her mother-in-law was asleep and breathing hard. Her father-in-law was evidently spending the night away, and that was fortunate. She slipped out to the strawstack and attacked it with all her might. Load after load, all she could carry on her back, was transferred to the moodang's house, and when the first cold streaks of dawn appeared in the east only a few scattered wisps were left.

Carefully brushing any telltale bits of straw from her hair and garments, she reentered the house. Scarcely had she done so when she heard the sound of trampling feet in the dooryard. The door was jerked open, and her father-in-law thrust in his face.

"Here she is," he said. Then he was pushed aside and another man leaped into the room,

seizing her by her arms, pinioning them to her side, and dragged her through the doorway. She knew him by sight. She had seen him more than once through the wicker fence as he took his drunken way homeward after a bout with his cronies. He was not old, except in sin, and his face would have been handsome but for the flush and bloat of dissipation. It seemed to her now like the visage of a demon as he bent over her, his hot breath blasting her cheek. She remembered like a flash that she had heard only a day or two before that his wife had just died and that he was in need of some one to take care of the house.

His mates were with him in full force, and they helped him bind the struggling girl and carry her through the gateway. She saw her mother-in-law come to the door with a little bundle in her arms, and heard her say, "Here, take this along. We don't want it here."

"Neither do we. Keep it yourself," was the answer.

"It's going to die, anyway. Take it along," the woman urged. Then she saw her neighbour, the mother of the sick children, rush out and wrap a comfort around the baby and press it into the arms of one of the men.

Outside the gate they met old Sim Ssi with drum and cymbals and sacrificial table, ready to begin the exorcism of the unwelcome Guest. She was a person of might in the community,

and when Pobai saw her, her lips opened with the first sound that she had uttered, "Help, oh, help!" she cried. But the old woman only stepped aside to let the party go by. "I got the straw, anyway," she muttered to herself, with a dry smile.

Pobai never had any very clear recollection of the next half-hour. Sometimes she was aware of being dragged along the ground by a rope around the waist, the frozen clods snatching at her garments and tearing the skin from her flesh. Sometimes she was on her feet, making desperate efforts to keep from being thrown. If she suffered any physical pain she did not know it. All her thoughts were with that little helpless bundle, whether left behind or whether somewhere in the party, she did not know.

In this way she reached her captor's home, a good tile-roofed house at the farther end of the long, straggling village. The man whose property she was now to be, cut the straw ropes that bound her and gave her a push into the kitchen.

"Get to work," he said. "I want my breakfast, and a good one."

Presently the baby was handed in to her. The wadded comfort had slipped away from the little limbs and she was icy cold. But the breath still came and went between the parted lips, and Pobai bound her to her back, hoping that the warmth of her own body would restore her. For a little while the hope seemed justified, but as the day

wore on and she hurried from one task to another, she became aware that the burden on her back was becoming heavier and colder, and she could discern no movement of the baby chest. She made no sign, but wrought on till night came, and her lord and master had gone across the street to the wineshop. Then she took down a "humi," a little short-handled, sharp-pointed hoe, from its peg under the eaves, and went out in the dark. She selected a spot on the frozen plain apart from the huddled groups of houses, and there she scraped away the snow and scooped a little hollow as best she could in the hard earth. Then she took baby's little body—it was quite stiff now—from her back, and wrapped it in the wadded comfort and laid it in the hollow. There was not earth enough to cover it, but she managed to loosen a few stones from their frozen beds and piled them up in a sort of cairn to keep the dogs away. Then she stole back to the house.

III

THE TERROR OF THE UNSEEN

WHY Pobai did not put an end to her wretched life in the days and weeks and months and years that followed, I do not know, except it was because the good God had something better in store for her. Often, as she sat at the riverside with her heap of washing, and watched the dark current flowing swiftly by, the thought of how sweet it would be to sink beneath those waves and never come back to a world so bereft of hope, welled up in her mind and almost overpowered her.

That was what sweet Basil Firstborn had done when her husband drove her away and put another woman in her place. Pobai had watched them drag the body out of the river and had seen the girlish features swollen out of all recognition, and the long hair hanging in wet strands to the ground. It would have been easy to have swallowed lye and died a slow death from starvation, as Willow Gentle had done, or to have taken the little bit of opium that brought the long, untroubled sleep. But something held her back, and she continued

to live under circumstances that might well have seemed unbearable.

One blessing she had, and that was the blessing of toil, and toil for others. In the family which she served were old grandparents, stricken in years and feeble in mind, and a little child whom the evil "Guest" had visited and deprived of sight. The old people were taken up with thoughts of the past and fears for the future, and did not often address her, but the little boy learned to love her, and often followed her about as she went hither and thither, guided by the light touch of his finger-tips on her skirt.

But the man whom she now called her husband—he was known to his acquaintances as Pang Mansiki—never in those days gave her one sign of sympathy or love. Sometimes for weeks he scarcely noticed her except to strike at her when she approached with his pipe or his food. Sometimes, when he did look at her, there was that in his glance more dreadful than any display of hate could be.

It was after more than a year of life with him that she reached the place where she felt it could no longer be borne, and it was then that she made another night visit to the home of Sim Ssi. The old woman took the proffered money and was ready with two suggestions, to one of which Pobai listened with a shrinking ear. She remembered when she was a little girl hearing her mother tell of a woman who had tried it. She had

waited until her husband was asleep, and then had approached him with a vessel of boiling oil and attempted to pour it into his ear. But her hand shook and the hot drops fell on his neck. He sprang up in a fury and sold her for a slave, and that was the end of it.

To the other suggestion she listened more readily, and slipping home again she proceeded to put it into execution. Her husband was asleep, and too full of liquor to waken readily. Gently she loosed his garter from about his ankle, and taking it out of doors cut it into shreds with a large pair of shears, blowing upon each shred and muttering as she did so,

“Take and break.

Scatter, what matter?

Once begun is undone.”

Then she bowed low to the four points of the compass, and showered invitations with her hands to every quarter of the universe, to come, come, come, come and rid her of the horrid yoke of this man's mastership. All done, she slipped back into the house and awaited tremblingly for days the coming of the curse. But alas! when it came it fell not upon her husband, but upon the two innocent old people, and Pobai, conscience-stricken, beheld them side by side on the floor, broken with coughing and burning with fever.

They did not want to die, the poor old heathen souls. Life had held little for them, but the future yawned at their feet, black with unspeak-

able terrors. On the other hand, their son did not want them to live, and had often secretly wished that they would die. He begrudged them the space they occupied in the house and the little they ate from day to day, but fear of visitations in the future from their revengeful ghosts kept him from making objection when they begged for the old moodang to be sent for. So she came, bringing with her Ko Pansoo, a blind man who had not been long in the neighbourhood, but who was supposed to know almost as much as she herself of the evil powers in this world and the next, besides being possessed of a knowledge of geomancy. When they were on good terms with each other, they plied their trades together. At other times they were rivals. He was a wiry little man, with half-shut orbs that rolled until hardly anything but the whites was visible.

The old woman cast Pobai a malicious glance as she went in, and winked, as much as to say, "You could tell how this came about if you would, and so could I." She unceremoniously cleared the house and porch of the thronging neighbours and began her work without delay. Spreading a mat on the maroo, or front porch of the house, she set thereon three little tables piled high with sacrificial food. Then she donned a long, fluttering silk garment over the dirty white muslin ones that she wore, took a fan in one hand and a small brass disc in the other, and gave the

word to Ko Pansoo, who sat at the end of the porch with a huge drum made of rawhide in front of him. Boom, boom, boom went the drum, and old Sim Ssi began to step about in slow rhythmic measures, swaying from side to side, now wielding the fan, now addressing the brass disc, which was supposed to be the medium of communication with the spirits who were causing the illness. Presently, warming up to her work, she cast the fan and disc aside, and seizing a pair of brass cymbals clanged them above her head. Faster and faster beat the drum and away went Sim Ssi, faster and more furious, swinging, swaying, and swirling, until her flying skirts threatened to engulf the gaping beholders.

Seizing a handful of the sacrificial food, she cast it into the air. "Take it and go! Take it and go!" she cried. Then with a loud shriek and renewed frenzy, she exclaimed: "They're going! They've left the house! They're out in the yard! They're going, going, going, ah-h-h!"

With a great boom and clang the music came to a sudden stop and dead silence reigned. Mansiki rushed forward and grasped the moodang by the arm. "What are you stopping now for?" he asked wildly.

"You've had your money's worth," the old woman answered coolly, beginning to strip off her silk coat.

"No, no, no! Here's more! Here's all I have! Go on! Go on! Don't stop now!"

The performance began again, very deliberately, and was carried on hour after hour with low croonings, mutterings, and swayings back and forth and from side to side. Evening passed away, night came and went, and morning found them still in their places. Spectators began to pour in again, and two women peered through the door of the room at the two old people as they lay side by side, gasping for breath. Their faces were a ghastly yellow, and they lay quite motionless, except for the labouring chests.

"Let's bet on it," said one woman to the other. "I'll bet you two yang that they are going to die."

"Too much risk," was the answer. "I think they are, too. They look a lot worse than they did last night."

The words reached Sim Ssi's sharp ears, and the performance was soon brought to a second and final stop.

"There's great lack of filial feeling here," she said, as she packed up the implements of her art. "I've been so poorly paid throughout this whole affair that I can't summon any power to prevail. Five hundred yang more last night would have done it, but now——"

In vain Mansiki tore his hair and offered to sell the furniture. The old woman was inexorable, and the pair speedily took their departure, taking with them the crowd of spectators. The little group of relatives melted, one by one, till

only the son was left. Then he, too, casting a terrified look at the two old faces where the grey shadow of death was already settling, put on his hat and shoes and slipped away to the wineshop. Lastly Pobai went, leading the little blind child by the hand, both of them cold with deadly fear, and the old parents were left to face the king of terrors alone.

Hours later when Mansiki came creeping back, he found the place empty except for the two poor heaps of dust on the floor—all that was left of the two who had reared him and nourished him, and whose pride he had been. They were out of the way, at last, and he was not sorry, but appearances must be kept up. So he loosened his topknot and rent his garments and howled until all who passed by exclaimed with wonder: "Oh, the filial piety of Pang Mansiki!"

Then Ko Pansoo was called in again and entrusted with the responsible duty of selecting a suitable grave site. The spirits of earth, air, water, trees, and stones were consulted, and much money was expended, yet there seemed great difficulties in the way of a fortunate selection. One spot, otherwise favourable, was found to be the bed of numerous small white stones, which, as everybody knew, would cause the birth of albinos among the descendants of any one buried there. Other sites had to be discarded for similar good reasons. Days went by. Hot weather was coming on, and the more anxious Mansiki

grew to make some final disposition of the mortal remains of his parents, the more difficult did the selection of a fortunate site seem to become, and the more expensive the services of the officiating geomancer.

When they were at last laid to rest, Mansiki found himself burdened with a large debt, beside having had to part with several of his best fields; but his mind was at peace, for had he not done everything that any man could be expected to do to insure a future unembarrassed by any visitations from offended spirits?

IV

THE SUPPLICATION OF A MOTHER

AS Ko Pansoo walked away from the house of Pang Mansiki, feeling his way along with the help of a long bamboo stick, and preceded by a little errand boy carrying on his back the last instalment of heavy copper cash which he had been able to extort from the writhing Mansiki, his thoughts were pleasant and a satisfied smile enwreathed his countenance. He reached forward and fondled the load of cash on the boy's back with the point of his stick. Evidently the wages of sin, for the time at least, were gratifying.

Several circumstances contributed to his elation. For one thing, in the race between himself and old Sim Ssi as to who would be able to wring the most money from Mansiki, he had distanced the old woman for the first time in their operations together. Heretofore, he had always been left in the position of reaching out vainly after the vanishing plum, and scratching his head in bewilderment that what he had thought so safe within his grasp was some way not there. But this time he had won, and the thought gave him a sense of power. If he could



FIRST-BORN, SECONDLY, AND SORROWFULLY

get the best of old Sim Ssi, what might he not hope to accomplish in the way of overreaching and deceit?

Having attacked and carried through one difficult piece of business, he saw himself in the way to bring about the desire of his heart in another direction, and he proceeded to set about it without delay. Arriving at his house he was met by his three little girls, First-born, Secondly, and Sorrowfully, the names indicating the several degrees of patience with which he had endured their successive advents. Across the road, up to her knees and elbows in the water of the rice-field, was a queer-looking hoop made up of dirty white muslin and bare brown skin. He heard the chug, chug of her feet as she moved about in the mud, and either by that token or by some other he knew it was his wife.

"Here you, Kesiki!" [thing] he shouted. One end of the hoop emerged from the water, and displayed hands and arms covered to the elbows with slime and ooze. "Come here. I want you."

Kesiki waded slowly out of the water and came and stood before her husband. She was a sodden, heavy-faced woman.

"I think you know what I'm going to say," her husband began. "I could stand it once, I could stand it twice, and I've had to stand it three times, but you know yourself that it mustn't happen again. If it does, out you go."

The woman cowered visibly. "I've done my best by you," she said.

"I'm not making any complaints," her husband replied. "You've been a good enough wife. I've been as well fed and well clothed as most men, but I must have sons. You know that as well as I."

"But what can I do about it?" the woman asked, with a sort of sullen desperation.

"You haven't tried the paik il sung kong [hundred days of overcoming] yet," he said.

"No, I haven't, and you know the reason why. It's because we've never had the money," she answered.

"Well, we've got it now," he said in reply, "and you'd better not lose any time."

The woman stood a while in silence. Then she said, heavily:

"It'll not be any use. Myriad Buckwheat-bloom tried it, and all she got was twin girls. Lucky Certain tried it and never got anything. It'll just be a waste of money."

"It will if you go about it that way," replied her husband, angrily. "If those other women failed, it was because they didn't do it right. They ate meat on the sly, or they failed to take a daily bath. If you don't succeed, it'll be your own fault."

Long before dawn the next morning, before ever the first spirit-disturbing cock might crow, Kesiki emerged from the house with a large

basin of copper on her head, and repaired to a nearby spring which bubbled out of the hillside. Casting a cautious look around, she put the basin down, removed her clothing, and lifting a gourdful of the water, poured it in a cool stream over her neck and shoulders. Over and over she repeated this until it ran in a flood to her ankles. Then stripping the water from her body as best she could with her bare hands, she hastily donned her garments, took up the copper basin, and started on her way up the mountainside to a Buddhist temple built among the rocks on its very summit.

The way was long and precipitous, and she was tired when she reached the top and found herself in the midst of the group of massive old buildings that constituted the monastery. Fortunately, she had met no one by the way. That would have been ill luck indeed. Two or three lazy monks greeted her obsequiously. Without stopping to rest, she put the basin and its contents on the ground and proceeded to build up a little furnace of stones, over which she placed the copper basin. With water brought from a spring at some little distance, she prepared a good quantity of fine white rice, a great contrast to the coarse yellow millet and brown beans which she always ate herself, and it was soon bubbling over the fire. When it was done to a turn, she dipped it out, a snowy, granulated mass, and heaped it into a brass bowl which she

placed in the centre of a wooden tray, 'Around this she grouped little dishes of vegetable delicacies, red pepper sauce, bean sprouts, white bean-curd, and spinach. When all was complete she took the tray and presented it first to the gilt image of Buddha, and then to the rude painting representing Sam Sin Chei Wang, the three spirits which preside over childbirth. Before each she prostrated herself for a long time, repeating over and over to those deaf ears her prayer, "O grant me a son! O grant me a son!"

The summer sun was several hours high when the last prostration was made, the last prayer offered, and Kesiki hurried away down the mountain path, leaving the sacrificial repast spread out before the imperturbable Buddha. If there was no added glow of satisfaction upon Buddha's features, the same could not be said of the monks, and during the hundred days that followed, while Kesiki grew weak and worn from long days of toil in the fields, and long tramps up and down the mountainside, and hours spent in prostrations which should have been given to restful sleep, the monks grew daily fatter and lazier, and Buddha never changed at all.

And now Ko Pansoo, having set into operation what promised to be a successful plan for securing a son, and being elated by his recent victory over Sim Ssi, became lustful of more power. He, too, repaired to the mountains. With his

staff in one hand, a bowl, spoon, and a little bag of coarse millet in the other, he set off for the far hills. And then a strange thing happened. He was no sooner out of reach of all prying eyes than his own half-shut lids flew open, and the wildly-rolling, inverted orbs suddenly resumed a normal position, revealing the fact that he was the possessor of a pair of very keen, sharp little black eyes. Thrusting the bamboo stick through his bundle, he swung it over his shoulder, and took up his way with a lightness of step and elation of manner oddly at variance with his usual custom, and then he began to sing. It was one of the road-songs that all his people know, a hopeless, reckless ditty set to a strange, minor refrain.

"Time, O Time, flee not away!
 Fresh spring's ruddy face is growing old.
 If we don't play now, when will we play?
 When once we mortals are dead and cold,
 Like the mist on the mountains we fade away.
 Let us feast, let us play.
 If we don't play now, if we don't feast now,
 When will we feast, and when will we play?"

Sometimes he crooned his song and sometimes he shouted it, and every now and then he took a little skipping step, after the manner of a blithesome goat. Joyful anticipations of success in this new venture filled the mind of Kō Pansoo.

His visit to the hills was not for a few hours

a day, or to offer sacrifice to Buddha, or to the Sam Sin Chei Wang. Away off in the recesses of the hills, a day's brisk walk away from home, in the face of a steep cliff overlooking a brawling little mountain stream, he found a cave. There for seven days and nights he sat, never once lying down, fighting off sleep, eating as seldom and as little as possible, and telling off prayer after prayer on his beads. And the presence that he craved and the power that he sought were the presence and power of Satan.

At midnight on the seventh day it came to him. Suddenly he was aware of a presence in the room, a something that turned his hair to wire and set his flesh to terrible creeping. No Egypt was ever darker than the cave where he sat, and yet he saw before him three creatures from the pit—one a woman, with hair like snakes and features distorted with hate and malice and love of every evil thing; one a half-grown boy, with three heads and seven tails, and one a man giant, big and bulging with power to blight and injure and to destroy. They leaned over him and held out their hands to him and said: "Here we are. Take us and command us, only remember that you are ours at the last."

Ko Pansoo fell then into what may have been either a faint or a stupor from protracted loss of sleep, and lay motionless on the floor of the cave until the evening of the next day. Then he dragged himself home, and for several days he

ate and ate and ate, and slept and slept and slept, until life and strength came back to him and he was ready to make a trial of his new-found power.

He was in the full swing of the first experiment when Sim Ssi appeared on the scene. What Sim Ssi saw was Ko Pansoo, once more a blind man, seated on the ground in the midst of a group of men, women, and children, drumming away on his rawhide drum and chanting vociferously. At the distance of perhaps twenty yards, on the summit of a little hillock, was a jug of coarse blue and white earthenware, containing a long-handled brass spoon, and the eyes of all in the group were fastened on this jug and spoon. As Ko Pansoo drummed and chanted a strange excitement began to take hold on the crowd.

"It's moving! It's coming! See it jump! Hear the spoon rattle!" went the comments from one to another in awestruck whispers. But what Sim Ssi, looking on from a little distance, could not see, was any movement whatever on the part of the jug. There it stood where Ko Pansoo had first placed it.

The old woman waited until the astonished ejaculations of the crowd indicated that they saw the jug actually leaping into their midst, and then she strode forward and called out in a loud, harsh voice: "You are fools, every one of you. Here! Look at that jug with my eyes and tell me what you see."

Instantly a hush fell over the crowd. They began to rub their eyes and to look blankly at each other. Some laughed foolishly. Others were very angry, and one man, with an exclamation of rage, applied himself with a vigorous kick, first to Ko Pansoo's drum and then to the gentleman himself. In another moment he found himself and his drum pushed, shoved, hustled, and kicked to the edge of the village, and as a final touch, the blue and white jug came flying through the air and struck him on the shoulder.

Sim Ssi stood by and looked on until his discomfiture was complete, and then she broke into a loud laugh.

"Try it again, young man," she said. "Try it again. Seven days is only a beginning. Nine times seven is better. Try it again."

V

AN ABSORPTION OF NEW IDEAS

AUTUMN was coming on, the fall of the year, nowhere so lingering and gracious as in Korea. The crops had been good, the harvests bountiful, and what Koreans called "plenty" reigned everywhere. The spirit of thanksgiving stirred in even heathen hearts.

Incidentally, also, there was something more than the usual ever pressing hunger for ton [money] in the maws of the crowd of officials at the neighbouring magistracy. So a great festival was appointed (with a lottery in connection), and the whole countryside was invited in to offer prayer and sacrifice to the spirits of plains, fields, river, rain, and anything else that may have contributed to the success of the harvests. Sorcerers, witches, geomancers, every one who professed to stand in any relation of influence to the powers of the lower world, flocked into the magistracy in a way that announced the presence of a carcass as no olfactory power could have done.

For four days and nights these remembrancers of Satan, in return for a proper and requisite compensation, kept not silence. With drums,

cymbals, fifes, violins, noise-making instruments of every kind, with chants and with dances, they worshipped him and sang praises to his name, and in return he honoured them with his presence. Liquor was everywhere, with every sort of device for gambling. Dancing girls and evil women abounded, and altogether, as Satan looked upon his work, there can be no doubt that he pronounced it all very good.

It was evening of the last day of the festival, and the people had begun to disperse to their homes. Sim Ssi, after reaping a rich harvest, had packed her paraphernalia and dispatched it for home on the back of a coolie, and now she was in for a little diversion before returning to the humdrum life of her own mountain village.

"Let's go and visit the foreigners and see what they're like," she said. The suggestion was all that was needed, and a moment later Sim Ssi was leading the way to the missionaries' homes, at the head of a little troop of women and girls.

They entered the first foreign compound they came to, and found there Mr. Missionary and his wife walking in the little fruit and vegetable garden which constituted the bulk of their front yard.

"She's no lady," said Sim Ssi, after a moment's stare. "Look at her, out in the open like any other coolie woman, with nothing over her face, and her head in the air as if she didn't care who looked at her."

"She can't be anything good," said another, "or he wouldn't be hanging around here like this as if he cared for her."

Just then the man reached forward and drew aside an overhanging branch of grapevine which threatened his wife's face. "Look how he weehows [worships] her! Did you ever see anything like that?"

"What a giant he is!" said another. "He's half as long again as any man ought to be."

"Horse tail!" cried another. "Look at her holding up her chema [dress skirt] like a horse does his tail."

As the group of visitors drew nearer, the man, animated apparently by a desire to conduct himself as discreetly as possible, withdrew and left his wife to receive them.

"Koo gyung chum choo" [Give us a sight-see], said Sim Ssi, advancing boldly and not troubling herself to use very polite language. The foreign woman made no reply in words, but turned to lead the way into the house, smiling as she did so, and revealing a set of teeth curiously ornamented with specks of gold.

"Did you ever see anything like that now?" the loud whisper went round. "I heard that they were rich, but I didn't suppose that they could afford to trim their teeth with gold."

The house was built after the Korean model, with cornstalk walls neatly plastered over with mud, a roof covered with heavy tiles and pro-

jecting in very wide, overhanging eaves. But the main room, which was the sitting room, parlour, and hall in one, instead of being eight feet square, was twice that modest dimension, the mud plaster was concealed behind pretty paper, and the floor, instead of being made of dried mud covered with coarse reed mats, was of wood and covered with neat rugs. An organ, a sewing machine, and typewriter were visible, and tables and chairs were scattered about. All were equally unheard of and inconceivable to the visitors.

"Wonderful, wonderful!" they exclaimed, gazing about them. "Are there any such abodes anywhere except those of mountain spirits?"

"Please be seated," said Mrs. Missionary.

Be seated, but where? Old Sim Ssi had warned them before they entered that it wouldn't do to sit on the floor. She had heard that these foreigners never did. But if not on the floor, where?

"Take seats, please; I have something that I want to tell you," said Mrs. Missionary again, smiling in a friendly way. It was impossible to resist the repeated invitation, and Sim Ssi, making a hurried choice amid such a distracting confusion of furniture, of what seemed best adapted to the purpose, proceeded to mount the centre table, followed by several others.

"Oh no, not there," interposed the foreign woman hastily, her features betraying strong in-

ternal emotion of some kind. "Here, you know," indicating the chairs with a wave of her hand.

Sim Ssi climbed down from the table, trying not to look disconcerted, and made a second choice of the baby's high chair, which stood near. She was a large woman, and the chair had been constructed only with reference to infants of medium size. Horrified anticipations of disaster sat on the missionary's countenance, but after a moment of trial, to her great relief the old woman descended from her perilous perch and made third choice of a seat, this time a rocking chair.

Now this rocking chair had accompanied Mrs. Missionary across the ocean, and had held her in its wooden arms nearly every day of her one short year of missionary life. Never once had it failed to receive her kindly, and to adapt itself cheerfully to her changing moods and motions. It was a trusted piece of furniture, and nothing could have been more unexpected than its behaviour at this moment. By some instantaneous and incomprehensible exertion of muscular force, this inhospitable rocking chair wrenched itself from under Sim Ssi and retreated to the corner of the room, where it remained kicking up its rockers merrily, leaving the old woman a heap of amazement and wrath in the centre of the floor.

The other women all laughed loud and long. It was not often that the domineering Sim Ssi

was brought to a place of humiliation, and they enjoyed it. All but the missionary woman, who ran to her relief and helped her up and seated her firmly in the missionary man's armchair, murmuring meanwhile words of queer, broken talk, which Sim Ssi did not understand, but which she dimly perceived were meant to be apologetic and soothing.

It was some time before the stir subsided and Mrs. Missionary was able to begin with the first words of her carefully prepared sentences.

"You all know about God, of course?" she said.

"Who doesn't know about God?" old Sim Ssi retorted, with strong traces of resentment. "Do you take us for animals?"

"You all know about him," went on the missionary, "but do you worship him?"

"Why should we? He's too far away. The demons are nearer," was the answer.

"God loves you and wants you to worship him alone. He loves you so much that he sent his dearly beloved Son——"

"What is she talking about? I can't understand a word she says. It sounds like Korean, and yet it doesn't."

"Korean! How can she be talking Korean? Don't you know that she's an American? It's American talk," said another, scornfully.

"—that he sent his dearly beloved Son, his only Son into the world to——"

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-five. To save us from our sins. His name is Jesus Christ, and——"

"Twenty-five! And with hair like that? We thought you were eighty at least."

"Are your parents living?"

At this point the missionary, not being entirely inexperienced, laid the gospel narrative down and took up another of a different sort.

"I am twenty-five years old," said she, "and my husband is twenty-eight. My parents are both living. My father is sixty years old and my mother is fifty-eight. I have three brothers and two sisters. My hair is not faded from age but has always been the color that it is now. I have been married a little over a year and have one child which I nourish myself."

"Girl, I suppose," interrupted Sim Ssi, adding in an aside to the other women: "They say these people don't have anything but girls."

"Yes, she is a girl, but we missionaries do have little sons too. My nearest neighbour has three sons and only one little girl. Now I want you to listen while I tell you about Jesus Christ. He is Lord and Saviour of us all, and there is no hope of salvation except in him. What he wants is the worship of our hearts and——"

"Well, why not?" broke in one of the women with a conciliatory air. "The more objects of worship the better. We'll just worship him along with all the rest."

At this point one of the women who had been looking about, discovered baby's doll propped up in the corner of the sofa.

"Here it is!" she cried. "Here is what they worship!"

And in a solid body Mrs. Missionary's audience deserted her and began to bow low with clasped hands before her of the blandly smiling cotton countenance. After that there was no getting a hearing from them, and presently they went away, leaving Mrs. Missionary to laugh a good deal and cry a little, and to take up once more with renewed energy the study of the Korean dictionary and grammar.

But instead of going straight home, Sim Ssi led her flock around to the back of the house and presented herself at the kitchen door. This was Yung Kyoo's domain, and here he held sway. Yung Kyoo was about eighteen years old. His hair was parted in the middle and hung in a thick braid down his back. Vain Yung Kyoo! Close inspection would have revealed the fact that a switch of false hair was woven in with his own natural locks. His eyes were bright and his tongue was ever ready.

He was at once the admiration and the despair of Mrs. Missionary. He taught her more Korean in a day than she was able to extract in a month from the sleepy old fellow whom she called her teacher. He applied himself with tremendous energy to the polishing of her few

pieces of silver, wedding presents from dear friends, and with the aid of bath-brick had succeeded in reducing them to a state which brought tears to her eyes whenever she looked at them. On one occasion at least, he had washed out his white muslin socks and hung them out to dry after having starched them in the contents of the mush-boiler. He stood between Mrs. Missionary and the little crowd of venders of various wares—chickens, eggs, oysters, fish, etc.—and succeeded in making purchases at much cheaper rates than she could have done, notwithstanding the fact that at every purchase a few cash pieces stuck to his own palm.

Just now he was sitting in the middle of the kitchen floor, with a pan of potatoes between his feet which he was paring for supper.

"Well, what are you after?" said he, rather inhospitably, as the shadows darkened the doorway. Sometimes visitors of this sort averaged thirty or forty a day, and Yung Kyoo had not yet acquired the patience of age.

Sim Ssi advanced into the room, and crouching down beside the boy, put her hand on his arm in a manner which she meant to be confidence-inspiring.

"Say, boy," said she, "tell us what they are like."

"Who?" asked Yung Kyoo, shortly.

"You know. These foreign people that you work for."

"Just like the rest of us."

"Are they, now? Are they like the rest of us?"

"Well, no," admitted Yung Kyoo, slowly; "they're not just like the rest of us. I've been with them for several months now, and I've never seen him strike her once, and if she yoks [scolds] him, it's when they're by themselves. I've never heard her. And they always tell the truth, too—not even little lies."

Silence reigned for a moment, and then old Sim Ssi asked: "What are they here for? To better themselves some way, of course, but how?"

"They are here to teach a new doctrine."

"A new doctrine! What doctrine have they got that is any better than the ones we have?"

"I don't know all about it myself. I'm not doing it yet, but I'm going to by and by when I get old. It's about somebody that they call Jesus. They say he 'saves' them, and they seem to get a lot of comfort out of it."

"Well, I'm not after comfort," said the old woman, decidedly. "I can get all I want for myself."

She straightened up and began looking about the room. An empty tomato can with a bright label attracted her attention, and a piece of broken windowpane.

"Take them along, if you want them," said Yung Kyoo.

"Say, do these people eat like we do?" she asked after a moment.

"Mugko malgo," replied Yung Kyoo, which may be freely translated as "You bet they do."

"What do they eat?"

"All sorts of things."

Here her glance and that of another old woman fell simultaneously upon a dish of butter. It was good butter; that is, as good as any butter can be which has been made months before, packed in brine, and shipped across the ocean. But Sim Ssi had never seen or heard of butter, and knew nothing of putting cow's milk to any use except that designed by nature.

"Do they eat that?" she asked. "What does it taste like?"

"Try it and see," said the wicked Yung Kyoo. With generous hand he bestowed a liberal portion upon each one, and with touching trustfulness the lumps were immediately transferred to the waiting mouths. An instant later two old dames rushed frantically out of the kitchen, and began coughing, spitting, and wiping their mouths with their hands. It was some moments before they could free themselves sufficiently from the sickening morsels to express their minds, and it was the symposium that followed which brought Mrs. Missionary to the kitchen.

"What in the world is this, Yung Kyoo?" said she.

"I couldn't help it, pouin" [lady], said Yung

Kyoo, with a final discharge of billingsgate after the retreating crowd. "They said that you ate stuff that would kill a dog, and that it was no wonder that your hair was as white as an old woman's, and that you had a face like a horse's, and a nose like a rice-ladle, if that was what you lived on; and I had to tell them what I thought of them. That's all."

VI

THE POWER OF MEEKNESS

WHEN Sim Ssi reached home after her visit to the missionary's, she took the label off the tomato can and pasted it on the wall for an ornament. The can itself she put on a high shelf to serve as a depository for fetiches. Then she scraped some of the paper off her little window and pasted the piece of glass on instead, becoming thereby the aristocrat of the neighbourhood.

It was the thread-making season of the year, and all the women who were not otherwise engaged were busy making up the supply of thread for the year's sewing. Sim Ssi took her spindle, tipped with its mass of snowy cotton, and went out into the street to hunt a crony or two with whom she might gossip. A few moments later she found herself one of a group of three at a doorway. As they sat and talked together, drawing out the cotton and rubbing it into long strands with their fingers, they might well have been taken for the Korean Fates, except that while two were old and wrinkled and nearly toothless, the other was still young and fair.

The latter was Pobai, and she listened with lack-lustre eye while old Sim Ssi recounted, with some reservations, what she had seen and heard at the foreigners'. Since the sad disaster of her attempt to get rid of her hated husband, Pobai had not dared to try any more charms, but her mind had been none the less busy with plans for escape. Sometimes for days a demon stood at her side, whispering, "Poison him, poison him," until it seemed to her that the whole firmament resounded with the words, and as if every one must know her guilty thoughts. Then other demons came and whispered, "Set the house afire and let him burn up." More than once she had stood beside him as he lay in a drunken sleep, with a match in her hand ready to apply it to the straw mat on which he lay, but some restraining influence prevailed, and from day to day she staggered on under the burden of a hateful and hopeless slavery.

Of late the river had been much in her thoughts. Her gaze wandered to it now, flowing along so silently and so resistlessly. Not a soul would care if she dropped beneath its wave. Mansiki would be put to the trouble of getting another housekeeper, and that would be all. Well, why not? It would be easier than living——

Old Sim Ssi's voice broke in on her thoughts.

"They said she was his only wife, but he treated her as if she were a princess. I never

saw anything like it. And yet the boy in the kitchen said that everything about the house was ordered to suit him. I don't understand it."

"What are they here for?" asked the other old woman, presently. "Why didn't they stay in their own country?"

"They are here to teach a new doctrine," answered Sim Ssi. "The woman tried to tell us about it, and you ought to have heard her to know how queer the American language is. I couldn't understand any of it hardly, and I don't care. I've got all the doctrine I want for this world, and who knows anything about the next? I guess it's only meant for people who are in trouble, anyway. The boy said they seemed to get lots of comfort out of it."

"Comfort out of it!" Oh, how sweetly those words fell upon Pobai's listening ear, and what desperate strength of longing awoke in her to know more of anything that promised comfort! She took her spindle and went into the house, and with beating heart sat down to think it over. It was not far to the magistracy—only six miles. She could start after dark and get back after midnight, and no one would be any the wiser.

That night the road to the magistracy was retreating swiftly under Pobai's flying feet. She had never been so far away from home before, and she was afraid, but a stronger emotion than fear drew her on. Where the little church was, the meeting-place of the Christians, she did not

know, but an inquiry or two led her to the right spot.

As she approached the building, her heart, so bold up to that moment, suddenly failed her. Perhaps there was no meeting that evening and no one would be there. Or what if it were meant only for men and old women, and they would not let her in? She lingered irresolutely outside the gate until she saw other women going in, and then she crept along in their shadow. At the door she paused again. One end of the little ell-shaped building was filled with women and girls, the other by men and boys, with a swaying grasscloth curtain hanging between. In front, only a few steps away, sat the missionary, with a Korean helper beside him. Pobai had never seen any one before who looked so queer. For the first time in her life she looked into eyes that were not black, but a bright blue. Stranger than that, his hair was a warm brown colour, and his skin was red and white. Bushy whiskers adorned his chin, and instead of huge black goggles encased in ponderous frames of horn and brass, he wore a ridiculously small pair of spectacles, apparently without any rims at all. His clothes were made of some sort of ugly, coarse dark goods, and fitted him so tightly that Pobai's first feeling of fear changed to one of pity as she considered how uncomfortable he must be.

As she looked again, she saw that those strange features radiated a look of kindness. His glance

fell upon the women and girls huddled before him, but there was only goodness and purity in his eye, and she saw that instead of hanging their heads and crouching behind each other, they ventured to look back at him fearlessly and even with trustfulness.

Presently the missionary arose and said: "Kedo hapseita." At the words the whole audience fell forward on their faces, and in the long pause that ensued before the missionary began audible prayer, Pobai thought that they were worshipping him. She did not understand the meaning of much that he said, but she felt keenly the spirit of love and reverence that permeated it all. Then the audience began to sing, and Pobai listened to what she afterwards described as the most beautiful noise she had ever heard. It was something about the love of Jesus. "Oh, his love for me, his love for me!" went the refrain. Then the missionary began to read something out of a book. Very strange and wonderful were the words that fell from his lips. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but should have eternal life." And then, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

"That means me," thought Pobai, and she slipped inside the door and sat for an hour and a half listening spellbound to the wonderful things that were said.

It was late and a moonless night when she started home, yet somehow the darkness seemed luminous about her, and the long miles melted away before her. She was alone, yet not alone, for One walked beside her, a tender and gracious Presence who took her hand and drew her poor head very gently to his breast, One whose touch could not hurt or defile her, but brought only purity and blessing. Pobai did not understand it and could not have put it into any words, but she knew that it was all ineffably sweet and marvelous. Warmth and love and light encircled her, and hope and courage sprang up in her heart.

Reaching home, she slipped in unnoticed, and lay down in her usual place on the floor. Hour after hour she lay with happy, wide-open eyes. Over and over in her ears rang the sweet refrain which she had heard at the church: "Oh, his love for me, his love for me!" Soft tears bedewed the straw mat on which she lay—tears of peace and joy. At last Pobai had found a Friend.

Every Sabbath and Wednesday night for several weeks Pobai went on the same pilgrimage to the little church at the magistracy. She came into possession of a New Testament and a hymn-book, and from looking with envious eyes upon the women and girls who could read, she began here and there, from this one and that one, to acquire a knowledge of the character for herself. Before she could have believed it possible,

she was able to pick her way up and down the lines and get out the thought for herself, and that was wonderful too.

One night, as she sped away homeward from the church, she became aware that she was being followed. From house to house, and bush to bush, as she went along, a dark shadow pursued her, and just as she was reaching home a man sprang out from the roadside, and catching her by the arms, dragged her toward the light.

It was Mansiki, her husband. "Now we'll find out what all this means," he said.

There was no concealing the precious Testament and hymnbook. He seized them and held them up toward the light, then tore them to pieces, leaf by leaf.

"Oho, so this is it, is it?" he said. "You've been going down to the magistracy to do the Jesus doctrine, have you? You want me to be cursed, do you, and all my house, down to the furthest generation? Here, wait a minute, and I'll do a little doctrine myself and see if that won't cure you."

Once more, as he had done before, he threw her to the ground and bound her with rope—only he needed no help this time, because she made no resistance but lay quite still before him.

"Now tell me," he said, standing over her with a heavy stick, "will you give this thing up or not?"

There was no answer for a moment, and if he

had stooped down he might have seen a look of great peace on her face. Then the words came bravely, even with a little thrill of joy, from her lips:

"You may beat me to death if you will, or saw me asunder, but I cannot give up my Lord."

The blows fell then, heavy and merciless. She did not feel much pain, but instead her spirit was possessed by a sense of high privilege in sharing Christ's sufferings. It was very sweet to suffer a little for him who had borne so much for her.

How far Mansiki's blind rage might have carried him, I do not know, but at this juncture the man who lived next door, aroused by the sound of blows, came and looked over the low wall of mud which constituted the division fence.

"Here," he said, "who'll get your breakfast to-morrow if you keep on like that? Lay that club down and finish up with this." He tossed him a stout switch as he spoke, and Mansiki wielded it until there was nothing left of it but the stump in his hand.

"How about it now," he asked, "how about this Jesus-believing business now?"

She did not answer at once, and for a moment he thought he had killed her. "Wake up," he said, giving her a push with his foot, "and tell me if you've had enough."

Her eyes were closed but her lips moved, and he heard her say: "Oh, the love of Jesus, the love of Jesus!"

The man started back, looking as if his strength had left him.

"What's the matter with you, girl," he said hoarsely, "do you want to die?"

"Not unless it is His will," she answered.

She did not speak again, or move, or make any effort to get away. He stood over her for a few moments in silence, then stooped and cut the straw rope that bound her and watched her as she rose staggeringly to her feet.

He watched her as she crept into the house, and for days and weeks he watched her, wondering. He did not beat her again, but nothing that a mean ingenuity could devise to tempt and try her was left undone. There were no more night trips to the magistracy to gather strength and courage with which to face the hard conditions of her lot. The portions of Scripture which she secured and tried to keep, he sought out and tore to pieces or tossed into the fire. Sometimes he slipped quietly into the house and surprised her at prayer, and then it was his delight to give her a kick, or bump her forehead against the floor. Nevertheless Pobai had peace, and she found a great joy in praying for him who was using her so spitefully. Some way the old hate and loathing that had seemed to consume her whole being was gone, and she longed more than anything else that he too might have Jesus for his friend.

One portion of the Scripture, the gospel of Mark, she got possession of, and managed to

keep by changing its hiding-place every day. Sometimes it lay for a day or two under the ironing-stone, then journeyed to the corner of the kitchen behind the big water-jar, such as Ali Baba and the forty thieves, one or two at a time, at least, might have hidden in; or it lay tucked under one or another of the row of inverted brass bowls on the kitchen shelf, or under the edge of the mat on the floor. Once it disappeared for a week, and Pobai mourned it as having gone the way of its predecessors, until she discovered it in the bottom of her sewing basket, where she was sure she had not placed it. It was freshly thumb-marked, as if some one might have been using it.

As time went by, and Mansiki watched and wondered, he grew restless. This quiet little woman, who waited on him so patiently, had come into the possession of something that he did not understand. It brought peace to her heart and a light to her eye that no sort of persecution seemed able to efface. He noticed that she took no interest any more in the propitiation of evil spirits, and seemed quite indifferent as to whether they were pleased or otherwise. Good and bad "signs" alike passed unheeded, and she kept on the even tenor of her way just as if all the spaces of the universe were not peopled with myriads of spiteful demons. Neither was she afraid of death any more, but went unhesitatingly into sick-rooms, and sat by death-beds, and helped

prepare bodies for burial, apparently without any dread. It was uncanny, and in spite of himself a sort of awe began to pervade his thoughts of her.

One day, after a late night at the wineshop, he lay sprawled out on the floor, apparently asleep. Pobai sat at the other end of the room with her work-basket, holding her sewing close to the little paper window. Presently she began humming a line of a hymn, "Yeisoo-eui 'pi patkeui umnei" [Nothing but the blood of Jesus].

"What's that noise you're making?" he asked suddenly.

She was afraid to tell him that it was a Christian hymn; so said nothing for a moment, and then asked: "Do you mind my doing it?"

"No, I don't mind," he said, adding in a shamefaced manner that sat on him with new and becoming grace, "I rather like it." So after that Pobai sang at her work, although not too loud or too constantly, for fear after all that it might displease him.

As Mansiki thought the matter over he came to the conclusion that he had no particular objection to anybody getting anything that could be of any advantage to them, either for this world or the next, but he resented the idea of obtaining it through the medium of foreigners.

"Upstart barbarians, every one of them," he said to himself, grinding his teeth. "They only come here to steal our land and put foolish notions into the heads of our women. What doc-

trines have they that are any better than those we have? Our Confucius, has there ever been a sage like him?"

Ah, Confucius! The name suggested a train of thought, the train of thought led to an idea, and the idea ripened into a purpose. He would give up his rowdy life, for a time at least, and apply himself diligently to the worship of Confucius, and see what came of it in the way of peace of mind for the present and assurance for the future. There were grave difficulties in the way, for although there was a Confucian temple at the magistracy, as there is in every district in Korea, and although it was open on every sacrificial day throughout the year, yet only scholars and gentlemen were allowed to worship there, and Mansiki could not lay much claim to being either one or the other. He had some influential friends, however, and the plentiful harvests had brought him money, which even in Korea has been known to work wonders in the instantaneous transformation of coolies into gentlemen and scholars. Gathering together all his available cash to the amount of more than a thousand yang [fifty dollars], he betook himself to the magistracy to set in motion whatever forces would be most likely to result in his elevation to the coveted rank.

The process was one which took time and money, and a good deal of both. At the end of a month his money was all gone, but the prospect

for success seemed bright. It was then that those in authority asked to see his "chokpo" [genealogical tree]. Mansiki had been fearing this. In vain he temporized, prevaricated, and deferred. In the end he had to produce it, and then he became the object of derisive laughter, for beyond six generations of ancestors he had nothing to show. Even now a further generous greasing of the official palm might have accomplished his purpose, but the supply of lubricating material was exhausted, and Mansiki, in a fit of reckless wrath, forsook altogether the calm composure which ought always to characterize a Confucianist, real or pretended, and proceeded to apply a liberal dose of verbal vinegar, which was never yet known to facilitate frictionless motion. In the *mêlée* which ensued he found himself finally on the outside of the big gate leading to the official headquarters, his white kid shoes, which had been projected through the air after him, sunk deep in the mud, and his hat of starched horsehair, gauze, and bamboo, a shapless mass about his ears.

His surface veneer had been scratched and the real Mansiki brought to light. It was very humiliating, even for a would-be Confucianist, and he formed a hasty resolution to get gloriously drunk and then go back to the village of Royal Helpfulness and stay there for the remainder of his life.

In pursuance of this resolution he fished his

shoes out of the mud, made some effort to restore his headgear to its pristine state, and was starting across the street when the sound of voices attracted his attention. Following the sound he found himself in a little courtyard and in the presence of one of the hated foreigners. He was accompanied by a Korean, and they seemed to be taking turns in addressing the little crowd that had gathered. It was the old, old story of divine love for a lost world, to which Mansiki listened, but he heard with dull ears, and when the speaker was through he jostled rudely against him and asked: "Where are you from and what are you here for?"

"I came from the Western seas," the man answered, quietly, "and my business is to tell of the true God and of his Son Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world."

"God!" echoed Mansiki, scornfully, drawing himself up with all the pride and boastfulness that his battered hat and disreputable shoes admitted of. "This is god enough for me," and he patted his stomach complacently.

"It's poor dependence for eternity," the man answered, quietly.

"That's so," the laugh went round among the crowd, and Mansiki felt himself worsted.

"What's the good of your doctrine?" he asked again more politely. "What profit is there in it for us?"

"Much, every way," answered the man in the

words of Paul, and in short, carefully selected sentences he began a résumé of gospel truth. Mansiki listened with puzzled brow, and at the first pause he turned to the Korean helper, who stood near, and said: "What is he saying? It seems to me very strange talk. I can't understand it at all."

"Let us talk it over," replied the man, and drawing him aside, they sat down together on the edge of the little porch. It was getting dark when they arose. The crowd had scattered and the missionary had disappeared. It was too late now to start home, and Mansiki went to an inn, where he sat all night with his head bowed low between his knees. All night he sat, almost without stirring, and till after noon of the next day. Then he started home.

When he left home a month before, he had said nothing to Pobai about his intentions or the probable length of his stay. Every day she had awaited his coming, and every day her heart had gone out in prayer for him. It was evening. Pobai's head was bowed to the floor in prayer. Oh, that the man who was her master might come to know the Saviour and own his gentle sway! She wept tears of longing as she prayed, and something of the eternal mother-yearning stirred in her heart. Suddenly his familiar step was heard at the door, and before she could move he was in the room. She lay very still with her face to the floor, expecting the usual kick or

thump, but none came. There was ■ long silence, and then a touch on the shoulder, a touch that had in it what in all her life Pobai had never felt before, a something of hesitation, even of deference. It held and thrilled her like deep music. She was trembling from head to foot.

“Pobai,” he said at last, in a voice that she did not recognise, “I have found your Saviour, and he has shown me what a brute I have been. I’ve been worse than any beast to you, Pobai.”

There was another long pause, but for her life she could not move or utter a word. He went on slowly:

“If you want to go, I’ll divide what there is left of the property with you, and set you up anywhere you like in a comfortable home; or, if you’re willing to stay——” He stopped again, and then went on brokenly: “If you’re willing to stay, I’ll promise you this, that I’ll never lay hand on you again except in love.”

It was all the work of a moment, but in that moment was wrought a miracle. All the deep scars of her unloved and unloving life melted into effacement; the very recollection of them slipped away from her, and out of the broken and deeply furrowed soil of her heart there sprang into being a sweet flower, the sweetest of all things left to fallen men—the power to love and to be loved.

When at last she looked up, she saw that he

had removed to a distance and was standing with bowed head, as he might have done before an aged parent or any one for whom he felt deep reverence. She turned, kneeling as she was, and started to creep toward him on her knees. He sprang forward and lifted her to her feet, and they stood a moment, looking full into each other's eyes. Then he took her into his arms, very slowly, very gently, as if mutely asking permission, and they sank together to their knees, and broken words of love and prayer, soft with tears, fell from their lips.

And so out of the wreck and wastage of their former lives these two people began together to build the fair edifice of a happy home, that rich ornament which seldom precedes a Christian civilisation, but follows it everywhere in its march throughout the world.

VII

THE BREAK WITH SIN

NOW Pobai sang at her work as free as the birds. Early in the morning as she moved about the dark little kitchen, her clear notes rang out until Mansiki, listening, smiled happily, and said to himself: "Our little wife is like the skylark. From morning to morning she rises up to heaven on wings of song." And after that when they were alone together he called her his "Chongtari," his skylark.

The long trips to the magistracy were not made alone now, but Mansiki and his wife went together, and spent the day at the church and among the believing brethren, drinking in divine truth with a thirst which seemed unquenchable.

But it was not enough to be happy themselves. They longed very much that others might be brought within reach of the great salvation which they had found. From day to day, as opportunity offered, they spread the good news. Some scoffed, some laughed and said: "You are out of your wits"; but some listened with a trembling hope that it might be true, and God,

whose tender mercies fail not, did not quench these poor bits of smoking flax, but fostered the precious flame until it sprang into full life and being.

Before long a little band began to meet together every evening at Mansiki's house to learn more of the new doctrine. Mansiki would take the passage of Scripture which he had heard expounded at church, and repeat it as best he could to his hearers. Then they would sing renderings in the Korean language of grand old hymns that have been the comfort of the saints in all ages, such as, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Rock of Ages," "Alas, and Did My Saviour Bleed," or something of newer words and melody, as "Sweet By and By," or "More Love, Oh, Christ, to Thee." Not one was able to imitate the Western tune, but they sang the words to a strange, quavering, minor melody, better adapted, apparently, to express heathen hopelessness than Christian joy. Yet being the best they could do, doubtless our God heard it with rejoicing. Then prayer would follow, and fervid longing after heavenly things welled up in heart after heart, and found expression in a flow of passionate eloquence.

Evening by evening the attendance on these gatherings increased until the room was crowded, and even the dark little kitchen was full. But in the midst of Pobai's joy at the ready acceptance of the gospel by her friends and neighbours, there

was a sense of lack. Her thoughts turned longingly to her childhood's home, to her father and brothers and to Grandfather Kim, who was still alive, though feeble and old. She talked the matter over with Mansiki, and one day they put together a little bundle of tracts, portions of Scripture and a few hymnbooks and set off for the distant hamlet where Pobai had been born, and which she had not revisited since the day she had left it, a little girl-bride years before. They were back in about a week, having disposed of most of the literature and having received from Pobai's relatives the assurance that they would "think it over."

They also brought with them old Grandfather Kim, and from that time forth the old man made his home with them, and his tottering steps were turned heavenward. He had grown quite deaf and did not understand all of the truth, or even very much of it; but one thing he knew, and that was that Jesus had died for him, and whatever the rest of it was, he felt sure that it was good. When he first came he sat in the sun, and droned over and over as he had done for so long his

"Ooltook, dooltook, chu nam san pogei !

Na do choogimyun chu moyang toigennei."

[Humps and hollows, just look at that hillside!

I'll be like that too, when once I have died.]

But Pobai soon substituted a different refrain, and whenever he began "Ooltook, dooltook," her

hand was on his shoulder and her voice in his ear. "Oh, no, grandfather, not 'ooltook, dooltook,' but 'dara, dara.' This way, you know: 'Dara, dara, Yeisoo dara kanei!'" [Follow, follow, I will follow Jesus.] And by and by he ceased altogether to revert to "Ooltook, dooltook."

Among the villagers who still held out against the gospel were Ko Pansoo and old Sim Ssi. Indeed, as far as Ko Pansoo was concerned, there were some things much more pressing which claimed his attention. The gospel could wait, but not so his creditors. Certain gambling ventures on borrowed capital which he had had on hand for some time had turned out disastrously, and he was being hounded on all sides by men who wanted their money. In Satan was his only hope, and he repaired once more to the cave in the mountains.

At the end of seven days of semi-starvation and sleeplessness he emerged to try his power, only to find that he had none. Another seven days, and again disappointment, and again and again until thirty-five days had been numbered, and still no power. Old Sim Ssi had held out sixty-three days and nights before the coveted boon was granted, but Ko Pansoo was already in a miserable state. He was only able to keep awake at all by propping up his eyelids with sharp sticks, and his orisons had subsided to an incoherent mumble, hardly above his breath. At

intervals when his last ounce of strength seemed on the eve of departing, he fortified himself with doses of the powdered root of wolfsbane, mixed with equal parts of powdered iron, copper, and lead.

Another seven days dragged their slow length along, and he was more dead than alive, yet still no visitation, no sense of power. After all his years of faithful service Satan had failed him. Perhaps he was trying to kill him. Ko Pansoo felt that, if so, another seven days would accomplish the satanic purpose. He dragged himself to where the little pile of dry sticks lay and prepared a full meal of boiled millet, which he ate to the last drop, then stretched himself on the ground and slept he knew not how long, after which he made his way home. How to meet his creditors he did not know. The prospect of prison, chains, beatings, nakedness, cold and hunger loomed up before him, and no way of escape presented itself.

It was dark when he came to the main street of the village, and the little crowd of nightly worshippers was assembling at Pang Mansiki's house. Ko Pansoo loitered about until all had entered and the service begun, and then he drew near and peered in at the door, seeing but unseen. It was all strange and unintelligible, and nothing so much so as the changed faces and bearing that he saw among the worshippers. He had known them ever since he came to the village,

known them in all their sin and hardness of heart, and yet as he looked from one to another, he realised that all had become strangers to him. All had found a confidence, a peace, a joy that he knew nothing of, and the old hatefulness and hardness were gone.

A great horror of hopelessness came over him. Peace, comfort, assurance for every one but Ko Pansoo! He turned away, and slowly, slowly took up his homeward way. When he reached home his purpose was formed. He did not enter the house, but went into the cowshed and groped about until he found a rope of horsehair, which he fastened around a beam and adjusted around his neck. The future in the next world could hardly be any blacker than the one that stared him in the face here, and it would only be the work of a moment——

At this instant steps were heard in the yard, and then the sound of a low voice. Looking through a crack in the rude wall, he saw that it was Kesiki. She had brought a pan of clear water and placed it so that the rays from the seven stars that form the constellation of the Great Bear might fall upon it, and over this she was bowing low and repeating over and over in heartbroken tones: "Hananimiyu, Hananimiyu [Oh, Heavenly One, Heavenly One], help me to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ!"

Ko Pansoo stood for a moment like one petrified, then with a loud cry he cast the

rope aside and rushed out to where his wife stood.

"Oh, Kesiki," he said, "that is what I want, too. Let us do it together!"

The woman's face was drawn with hard pain. "But suppose we never have any boys, after all?" she said.

"I hope we will," answered Ko Pansoo, as he helped his wife into the house, "but," he added, manfully, "boy or girl, we'll call the next one Pangabi [Glad]."

The next few days always remained inscribed on Ko Pansoo's memory as a period of tremendous mental agility. He was conscious of executing a series of mental somersaults which left him in a strangely inverted and hitherto unnatural position. His old master, whom he had always feared and served, he now hated with all the strength of his nature, but the new Master—how to seek him, where to find him? He sat like one confounded amid the wreck of his past ideals and beliefs, reaching out groping hands after God, if haply he might find him. And that Gracious One, who is never very far from any one of us, reached out a strong hand from out of the darkness and drew him on toward himself.

One thing became plain, and that was that he must break altogether with his past life. Nothing to his understanding typified so entirely all those years of sin and deceit as the big drum which had

been his companion and fellow-sinner, and he fell upon it in a sort of rage. He burst in the two heads of rawhide with a couple of savage kicks, and attacked the oaken ribs with an ax, leaving them in fragments. Now his bridges were burned and there was no turning back. His means of livelihood were gone, and what next?

It was thus that Pang Mansiki found him. He gathered up the broken pieces of the drum, and took Ko Pansoo by the hand and led him to his own house. There, until the hour for evening service, they prayed and wept together. Mansiki expounded the Scriptures as best he could, and the eyes of Ko Pansoo's spiritual understanding were enlightened. When the crowd gathered in the evening, he was the first to rise, and stood before them all, not the blind worshipper of devils whom they thought they knew, but a humble child of God, stripped of all fraud and deceit, and crying to them and to God for forgiveness.

When he had finished, Pang Mansiki arose, produced the broken pieces of drum and told the rest of the story. The hearts of all were melted within them. One old woman arose, and stripping off her long white silk outer garment, tossed it across the flimsy partition to where Ko Pansoo sat, bowed to the ground, crying out as she did so: "He shall not suffer lack for this if I can help it!" Others, men and women, followed with finger rings, ornaments of silver

and jade, and crowning all, a long switch of false hair, always equivalent to ready money in Korea, came flying across the partition, and, lighting upon the shoulders of Ko Pansoo, completed the picture of spontaneous though dishevelled generosity.

Nothing like this had ever come within the range of Ko Pansoo's experience. "Dear friends and neighbours," he said when he could speak at all, "if you had kicked me out of the house, I could have understood it, and could have had nothing to complain of, but this—this breaks my heart," and he added, sobbing: "I didn't know that there was such love in the world."

And Mansiki answered for all the rest when he said: "Neither did we till we knew God, for God is love."

VIII

MODERN EXORCISM

NOT many days thereafter, early one morning, old Sim Ssi passed by Ko Pansoo's house with a human skull in her hand. The night before she had carried it out to the mountainside and left it on a flat stone to gather dew. She meant to repeat this every night until sufficient moisture had gathered to make a dose of medicine, which she would sell at a high price as a cure for malaria.

Ko Pansoo was out in the yard as she went by, and for the first time in her acquaintance with him she saw something more of his eyes than the whites, but she betrayed no surprise.

"Hello, young man," said she with her usual insolence; "quit shamming, have you? Found something else that pays better?"

"Yes, I have," answered Ko Pansoo, boldly, "and if it's good for me, it'll be good for you. I advise you to try it."

"What is it?" she asked, drawing near. "If it's something good, put me on to it. I always was your friend."

Ko Pansoo waived the last remark and

answered without hesitation: "It's the Jesus doctrine."

The old woman stared at him in amazement for a moment, and then answered shortly: "You stayed out in the cave too long. What wits you had have left you. The Jesus doctrine!" she went on with sudden vehemence; "the Jesus doctrine will leave nothing of your trade or mine if it keeps on. I'd be starving if my present practice was all I had to depend on. But it'll not last. It'll pass over. They are all fools, every one of them, and you like the rest. Why, I could go over to Pang Mansiki's house to-night, and all I would have to do would be to beckon, and they would every one of them flock to me."

"Try it," advised Ko Pansoo; "try it and see." He had never been able to face old Sim Ssi before, but to-day he felt no fear of her.

She went off peeping and muttering, and that evening when she went by again with the skull, and the next morning when she came again with it, the conversation was renewed, Sim Ssi taunting and reproaching, Ko Pansoo bravely defending the faith that was in him.

The whole situation was one that Sim Ssi bitterly resented. For years she had ruled the community like a despot, and the habit of absolute power was strong upon her. One night she determined to make a proof of her boasting, and re-establish her old supremacy by a master

stroke. Arraying herself in all the paraphernalia which had always been so awe-inspiring to her subjects, and taking in her hand the fan and the little brass disc through which she communicated with the powers of darkness, she made her way to Pang Mansiki's house. It was somewhat late and the house was full, but Sim Ssi pushed boldly in and took a prominent place among the worshippers. She counted on her mere presence subduing the elements which had ventured to oppose themselves, and when the strategic moment came, she meant to strike a crushing blow.

Ko Pansoo had never heard of General Grant, but he rightly divined that there are times when the strategic moment is likely to be the first one that presents itself, and also that an attitude of attack is always to be preferred to that of defence. With an inward cry to God to show himself strong, he sprang to his feet and began to pray for Sim Ssi. Without fear or faltering, he held her up before the Almighty in all her wickedness, and Sim Ssi saw herself as others saw her and as she was in the eyes of a pure and righteous God. On and on he went, recounting the hideous details of her past life as they all knew them, and concluding with a mighty appeal to God to have mercy upon her lost soul.

As he prayed, the audience cast themselves forward upon their faces, and sighs and groans

of intercession filled the air. Old Sim Ssi alone remained erect, as if turned to stone. Suddenly, as if impelled by a force beyond her power to resist, she sprang to her feet, tore off her sorceress' garments, cast away her fan and disc, and rushing headlong over the prostrate worshippers, she fled from the house. All the way home she ran, and threw herself on the floor of her little room. Terrible visions of her past sins rose before her—sins that she had repudiated, palliated, and denied; sins that she had gloried in and boasted of; sins of which no one knew, or could know; murders, adulteries, unspeakable uncleannesses, deceits, frauds, lying cheats of every kind—a dreadful horde that crowded around her and laid hands on her to drag her down to hell. God's face she saw, a face of offended majesty and wrath, and between her and any hope of pardon was that awful mountain of sin.

For days she agonised. One after another, and in little parties, pitying brothers and sisters in Christ came and offered loving balm to her crushed soul, but there seemed to be no healing for her hurt. They spoke of forgiveness and peace, but to Sim Ssi's mind the words recoiled from such deep guilt as hers.

Relief came at last when Kesiki appeared at the door one day with little Pangabi tied to her back and a happy smile on her face. She handed Sim Ssi a folded sheet of paper, and spreading it out on the floor before her, the old woman read

in large, beautiful characters, the best that Ko Pansoo could do, the three words: "Remember Jesus Christ."

As she gazed at the words another vision was granted her. Over against that great mountain of sin she saw the crucified Saviour, so pure, so lovely, so full of melting compassion, and his dear face was turned toward her, and she found herself able to lift her eyes to him. And the mountain of sin shrank away out of sight, and the way of approach to God was made clear. Then the floodgates of tears were opened—no longer tears of horror and despair, but sweet tears of penitence, grief, gratitude, peace, love, and joy. She wept while day passed on and darkness gathered. It was some time in the night, she hardly knew when, that a Presence came to her, all white and glistening, awesome yet tender, and seemed to say: "Weep no more, my child. The rest of life is yours to spend in loving service for me."

Thus it was that once more in Christian annals a great sinner found a great repentance and a great Saviour, and old Sim Ssi became, like Paul, a main prop to the faith which once she would have gladly destroyed.

Half-way measures were not possible to one of her nature, and having parted company with Satan, Sim Ssi's first act was to repudiate him wholly and entirely. From every nook and corner of her house and yard she brought out a

host of wretched fetiches, some of recent date, many that had been festering in their places for years. Among the lot were old wornout straw shoes, pieces of rag rotten with filth, scraps of paper written over with prayers and incantations, human bones, images made of straw, pieces of gourds and broken dishes, and spirit-garments of silk and gauze, made and stuck away in dark corners in the hope that the spirits would find them and be pleased.

To this heap of rubbish piled up in the doorway, she added all the instruments of her craft, her witch-garments, fan, and disc, gathered up from Mansiki's yard, whither they had drifted after she had discarded them on that memorable evening; the dried carcass of a dog, denuded of hair, which had passed with the credulous as the body of a child; bundles of pills, powders, and pastes made up of unspeakable ingredients, for the supposed cure of all human ills, and last of all, the human skull with its accumulation of dew, which had consisted, now that the truth is out, almost altogether of river water, added from time to time as the demand required.

When this extraordinary house-cleaning was completed and everything that pertained even remotely to demon-worship or fraud of any kind had been dragged to light, Sim Ssi applied a match to the heap, and as the smoke rolled heavenward, she opened her hymnbook and began singing in tones of triumph:



THE REGENERATED SIM SSI

“O happy day, that fixed my choice
On thee, my Saviour and my God !”

Word of what was going on spread through the village “param pyuneuro” [by way of the wind], as the Koreans say, and the Christians came running from all sides. All had discarded their fetiches on accepting Christ, but none had had the hardihood as yet to destroy them altogether. But now when they saw the smoke and flame from Sim Ssi’s sacrificial altar, if such it may be called, and heard the old woman’s ringing notes of exultation, they hesitated no longer, but gathered up the poor heaps of trash from where they had been thrown, and added them to the flames. Then they all joined in with “Happy Day,” “Rejoice and Be Glad,” “Jesus Saves” and other hymns of Christian courage and faith, and sang on as long as there was anything left of what had once been objects of awe and veneration.

Once more a leader, but for good now instead of evil, Sim Ssi laboured incessantly. Everywhere through the hills and valleys she went, taking with her portions of Scripture and hymn-books, and telling everywhere the story of salvation. She had been widely known as a priestess of evil, and now her fame spread as a fearless follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. As she laboured she prayed. Great was her longing after the things of God, and very close was the fellow-

ship which she had with Him. Sometimes as she sat alone of evenings in her little room, singing straight through the hymnbook, or alternately reading and meditating on the Word and pouring out her soul in prayer, she became aware once more of that gracious Presence with her. A something sweet and refreshing stirred in the atmosphere, and although the doors and windows were all closed, the leaves of the Testament would flutter as if moved by a gentle breeze. Then she would murmur: "Kamsa, kamsa-hamnita" [I thank thee, oh, I thank thee], and betake herself to rest, her thirst quenched, her longing soul satisfied.

No disturbing view of the Scriptures as a mere collection of history, poetry, and other literature of a more or less elevating character, ever invaded Sim Ssi's peaceful breast. To her it was the word of God. Demons and their ways she was familiar with, and the subject of demoniacal possession was not one with her for doubtful disputation. Every Korean is personally acquainted with such unfortunates, and when Sim Ssi read in the Gospels that Christ cast out demons and bestowed like power upon his disciples, she accepted the commission and exercised it with unquestioning faith.

One day word came to her that she was needed at Pang Mansiki's house. Going over, she found there a most miserable object, a young woman of twenty-three or twenty-four, bruised and

bleeding from head to foot, and hardly able to stand. It was Toulchai Umuni [the Mother of Secondly], a member of a heathen family living not far away, who had become possessed of a demon, and had been dreadfully beaten day after day by her relatives in the hope of expelling the unwelcome intruder. The sound of her cries had become unbearable to Mansiki and his wife, and they had approached her friends with the proposition that they take her to their home and give her the opportunity of treatment from Sim Ssi. The family would have been glad to get rid of her altogether, and readily gave their consent. So here she was and here was Sim Ssi.

The poor creature crouched in the corner of the room, carrying on a muffled conversation with her familiar.

"Oh, no, no, no!" she was saying.

"Yes, but you must."

"Oh, but how can I?"

"This way. I'll show you." Then followed whispering and chuckling.

"That's right. Good! He, he, he!"

On and on went the talk with hardly a moment's cessation, the woman sometimes agreeing, sometimes begging and whimpering, but always yielding in the end to the superior will of the other.

Sim Ssi sat down on the floor directly in front of her and surveyed her calmly for several

moments. Then she said: "Are you possessed of a demon?"

The question was repeated several times, each time in a louder tone, before the woman seemed to hear. Then she answered:

"Yes, I am. Oh, have mercy on me! Don't kill me!"

"I'm not going to hurt you," said Sim Ssi; "I'm going to help you get rid of this demon."

"Oh, let me be, let me be!" came from the woman's lips. "I want to stay. I will stay. Let me alone!"

"I'll give you so long and no longer," replied Sim Ssi, with perfect assurance. "When I say the word you will have to get out."

Motioning to Mansiki and Pobai to follow her example, Sim Ssi knelt, face downward to the floor, and the two others followed her in long and earnest prayers. Every time they mentioned the name of Christ, the woman hissed and spat, and struck at them with hands and feet.

The prayers concluded, Sim Ssi took up her hymnbook and began singing:

"I am so glad that our Father in heaven
Tells of his love in the book he has given"—

a hymn which she found to have peculiar expulsive power with regard to demons. Over and over they sang this song, until the manifestations of hatred and spite on the woman's part had subsided into a low, monotonous crying.

"Now," said Sim Ssi, "I'm going to adjure you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to come out of her and let her alone."

"Oh, not so soon," came from the woman's lips, "longer, longer! Till morning cockcrow, anyway!"

"Not a minute past midnight," said Sim Ssi firmly.

By this time it was evening, and the usual company of worshippers had assembled. The poor demoniac was placed in the midst of them, and under Sim Ssi's leadership, the attention of all was concentrated upon her and their prayers went up in her behalf. During the early hours of the evening she was perfectly quiet beyond an occasional snarl or whimper, but as midnight approached she grew very restless, turning constantly from side to side in a way that suggested the motions of a wild animal in a cage. When midnight came old Sim Ssi rose and made a gesture of command. The praying ceased and dead silence reigned. Then Sim Ssi called out in a loud voice: "Thou foul spirit, I adjure thee in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, come out of her!"

At the words the woman was thrown backwards on the floor, where she lay screaming and writhing for a moment, and then all sound and motion ceased. She was like one dead, and the rest of the company were frightened, but Sim Ssi, always self-possessed and dauntless, called for

water and sprinkled her face and chest. Presently life came back to her, and she sat up, very weak, but quiet and sane. The demon had taken his departure, never to return, for from that hour Toulchai Umuni and all her family joined themselves to the little company of believers, and walked thereafter among the redeemed.

IX

A CHANGED WORLD

AS the word of the gospel spread among the villagers, and the good seed of the kingdom took deep root and sprang up in many hearts, the attendance on the evening meetings increased to such an extent that it became necessary to divide the congregation. The men continued to meet at Mansiki's, while the women and girls transferred their attendance to the house of Ko Pansoo. Here Ko and Sim Ssi held forth together in a sort of mutual leadership—the old partnership resumed, but on what a different basis!

Still the attendance increased, and before many months every foot of floor space at both places was so closely occupied that no worshipper could be sure, on rising to his feet, that he would be able to resume his seat again during that service. The porches were crowded, and even the yard outside, and it became evident that they must arise and build.

The decision was reached unanimously at an outdoor meeting of the whole congregation, held at the call of Mansiki. All knew the purpose of the meeting, and all came prepared to make any

sacrifice necessary in order to have a church building. After singing, reading of the Scriptures, and prayer, secretaries were appointed and contributions called for. Instantly half a dozen men were on their feet, but before they could speak, three venerable old men who had been sitting together in the centre of the audience arose, and the younger men immediately gave way. They were the village elders, and one of them proceeded as spokesman to address the meeting.

"Dear brothers and sisters," he said, "all around us are houses for demon-worship, and for the worship of idols of wood and stone, but up to the present time the Lord God of Hosts has had no visible dwelling place among us. The whole past of our lives has been put in at the worship of evil things. The best of everything has gone into the service of demons and idols. The time left us is short. We have taken our old lives down and rebuilt them to the glory of God. Even so let us take the building which has hitherto housed Buddha and his worship, tear it down, remove it from its place, and put it up again as a tabernacle for our God."

All knew what he meant, and as the three old men took their seats, enthusiastic cries of assent rose from all sides. The temple at the top of the mountain, to which Kesiki had so often trudged her weary way, was now deserted both of priests and worshippers. The timbers were very old,

but some of them were still good, and there were beside many hundreds of yangs' worth of stone and tile in the building. It was two hours of mountain climbing away from the village, but willing hands make light work, and in a very few moments fifty men had offered to help tear the building down and transfer the material, manload by manload, to the proposed site of the church building. Ko Pansoo promptly tendered the use of his ox to bring down the timbers, although he knew what the offer involved. It meant that he would not have the use of the animal for the spring ploughing, and that he himself would have to take the beast's place at the front of the plow, with Kesiki at the handles. The work would not be so well done nor the year's crop so good in consequence, but they could get along.

For a site, old Mr. No offered a beautiful location which he had been reserving for years for his own burial place.

"Put this old body anywhere you like," he said. "I want to see God's house go up on that spot."

The Min father and son came forward with an offer of standing timber from a magnificent pine grove which had been in the family for eleven generations, and several men immediately offered their services in felling the trees and reducing them to beams and pillars.

Then the women came forward with offerings

and pledges. Old Sim Ssi stripped from her fingers two huge silver rings and handed them in, together with a beautiful knife-holder of wrought gold, and others followed her example until there was a little heap of gold, silver, and jade ornaments on the floor in front of the secretaries. Pobai knew where she could get some silkworms, and she promised the proceeds from a bolt of "Myunchoo" [native silk goods]. Kesiki contemplated a crop of cotton, and promised the price of two bolts of cotton cloth. Toothless Kwun Ssi had a pig in the pen at home, and the worth of the pig was added to the fund. The Mother of the Conquering One promised the results of the first hatch from her little flock of fowls.

One poor woman, the wife of a drunken, persecuting husband, slipped out and came back with a silk jacket left from her wedding trousseau and the one article of any value which she possessed, and after all was over, one woman, a widow and long in consumption, was discovered weeping because she had nothing to give, and the others crowded around her with loving words and caresses, assuring her that she with her tears had given more than they all. It was a glorious occasion. Never had the village of Royal Helpfulness so richly exemplified the name, and never did any people go to a sweeter rest than this little band of Christians on the night after this memorable meeting.

Before many days the early dawn of each spring morning saw a procession of men marching Indian-file up the mountainside, armed with "jikkies"—wooden racks for carrying loads on the back—baskets, axes, and picks. As they went along they sang until the woods resounded, and after they reached the old temple and cast themselves upon it like so many swarming ants, tearing up the roof-tiles, demolishing the walls of dried mud, and loosening the old timbers, still snatches of Christian melody welled up in their hearts and broke in sweet strains from their lips until old Buddha's ears rang with the medley of unaccustomed sounds.

In the course of a long career as an eminent and highly respected idol, he had gazed into thousands of bleeding hearts and had listened to thousands of heartbroken petitions; he had looked on at greed and deceit, selfishness and rapacity, but to-day he saw for the first time love and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and listened to the tuneful praise of Jehovah. If he realised his power gone and his worship despised, he was too thorough a gentleman to show chagrin or emotion of any other kind, but stood his ground with the unshaken complacency of generations in his face, until one of the workmen, by an inadvertent movement, precipitated him over on his back. There he lay, his gilt shoulders in the dust, his wooden base turned up to the public, exposed at last for the hollow sham that he was.

Afternoon and evening saw a return procession crawling down the mountainside, heavy-laden as to body, but still light as to heart, each man carrying on his back a great load of tiles or stones. No one ever computed the number of trips made back and forth, either by the men or by Ko Pansoo's ox, but the patient animal did his part with the rest, and no doubt rejoiced in spirit with his fellow-labourers when the last load of usable material was brought away. He was accustomed to labour, but there were those who wrought with him who were not—men who, until the love of Christ constrained them, would have regarded the mere suggestion of muscular exertion as an insult.

It was late summer when the building was completed and the congregation came into the full enjoyment of the fruit of their labours. Then glad news came from the magistracy. The missionary was coming to see them. He would dedicate the building, examine the catechumens, and baptise those who were ready, administer communion, baptise the children, marry any couples who presented themselves, adjudicate any differences, advise, rebuke, exhort, and get them into shape to pass through the next long space of time which perforce intervened between his visits. Mansiki and Pobai were to entertain him. A stir of joyful anticipation pervaded everything.

At the missionary's house that gentleman was preparing for the trip by getting out his folding

canvas cot, and stuffing his outfit of bedclothes into a big bag, also of canvas. The trip was to be a short one this time, and he was going light-handed, leaving behind him the necessities of life as represented by American articles of diet. Yung Kyoo, who usually went along in the capacity of cook, was thus rendered superfluous, but the youth evidently had something to say in the matter.

He came in and stood behind the missionary's chair, with eyes cast down and an air of some embarrassment.

Presently he said: "The pouin [lady] says that you are going to Cho Wangi."

The missionary assented, and Yung Kyoo continued with even more diffidence: "That is where the girl lives that I am expecting to marry."

"Indeed," said the missionary with interest. "I hadn't known that you were engaged, Yung Kyoo. How long since, may I ask?"

"Only a few weeks," returned Yung Kyoo, pensively. "I had had no thoughts at all of anything of the kind, but my mother got after me about it, and the girl's friends too gave us no rest, so I consented, finally, to get rid of the bother."

"This is all very interesting," said the missionary. "You have not seen her, of course?"

"Only her soochok" [hands and feet], returned Yung Kyoo, with the same pensive air.

"Her hands and feet! And how did that happen?"

"Well, you see a mutual friend told me that she was going to pass along a certain street at a certain hour, so I went into a house along the way and peeked through the crack of the door at her."

"It was satisfactory, I hope," ventured the missionary, after a pause.

"Somewhat," returned Yung Kyoo, reservedly. Then he went on with what seemed like a sudden access of courage: "The pouin tells me that in your country engaged people see and talk with each other before they are married."

"So they do," admitted the missionary, "but that is entirely contrary to the best Korean custom, isn't it, Yung Kyoo?"

"Yes, it is," replied Yung Kyoo, with increasing boldness, "and so are a lot of things that you do; but I like your ways better, and what I want to ask is, if you will not let me go along with you to Cho Wangi and arrange for me to see this girl—not alone, of course, that would never do, but with all her family and yourself present."

The boy stopped, breathless at his own audacity, and the missionary replied with an air of grave consideration, that in a matter where the proprieties were so seriously concerned, he would have to consult the "pouin." Mrs. Missionary was called in, and Yung Kyoo repaired

to the kitchen to send up petitions that she might be graciously disposed. Every woman reader, at least, of this simple tale knows already what the attitude of that lady was, and the next morning when the missionary started away, Yung Kyoo was at his heels, his cheeks red, his eyes shining, and his long braid of hair freshly combed and oiled to the last degree of glossiness.

Six miles of a summer morning to one of long legs and a light heart, or even to one of light heart alone, are hardly worth mentioning, and Cho Wangi was soon in sight. The whole village was on the watch to welcome the missionary, but Grandmother Yoon anticipated them all and appeared on the scene while he was still a long way off, with the offering of a hard-boiled goose egg with which to stay the pangs of hunger until dinner time should arrive. A man less dauntless than he might have been appalled, but he was descended from stanch Scotch stock, adorned here and there with martyrs, and he was blest beside with a digestion which never faltered at anything. So he accepted the egg with thanks, and carried it in his hand until he arrived at Mansiki's house, and then he began calmly at one end of it and made his way through to the other, while Grandma Yoon sat at his side and watched the disappearance of each mouthful with unfeigned satisfaction.

The multitudinous greetings over, the missionary started in for a busy day. First came

the examination of candidates for baptism, a dozen of them, all more or less anxious and flustered, but most of them tolerably well prepared. Then came candidates for the catechumenate—men, women, and children. Here was Iksoo, a little boy of eleven, leading his father by the hand. The child had accepted Christ at the evening services and had persisted in his faith in the face of real persecution. Beatings, imprisonment, and even stabbing at the hands of his father, he had endured without wavering, and now the man's opposition was broken down, his heart melted, and he came with his little son, asking for entrance into the church.

Grandma Yoon reappeared here. Her interest in Christianity had begun with hearing the singing as she went by Mansiki's house. Never had such a rapturous sound saluted her ears, and all she had desired was to live long enough to learn how to make it herself. Up to that time she had never learned to read, and she was sixty-five years old. But when she found that there was a book which contained the words that accompanied those beautiful sounds, scholastic ambition awoke in her breast, and she went to work with the help of her little granddaughter to learn to decipher the characters.

"And now I can!" she said, in a positive tremble of pride and triumph. "Just listen!"

Little Poktooni, who sat at her side, opened the hymnbook at "Jesus loves me, this I know," and pointed out each character with her finger while grandmother followed along with shaking voice, only stumbling a little here and there. It was the happiest moment of her life. Plainly there was no just reason for keeping either grandma or Poktooni out of the catechumenate.

Mr. Min, who had been admitted to the catechumenate some time before, came next, accompanied by a young woman. The faces of both showed signs of recent weeping, although they were calm now.

"Moska" [pastor], said the man, "I have a confession to make. Since I saw you last I have committed a grievous sin. As you know, I have no children, and I have wanted children very much. I want little boys and girls to climb about my knees, and keep my name alive and my memory green after I am gone. And so I yielded to temptation and took a second wife in the hope that I might have my heart's desire. I have never been happy about it, and the other day when I heard that you were coming, I felt too ashamed to put in an appearance, and determined to hide until you went away. I just sat in the house and wept and mourned until my chugeun chip [little house; that is, concubine] said to me: 'If sin makes us as ashamed as this before man, how will it be hereafter when you stand before

God?’ So the two of us spent the whole night till daybreak weeping together and trying to come to some conclusion, and at dawn God sent us the comfort that he promises to those who mourn. My concubine said: ‘It is better to do right, even if it kills us, than to keep on living in sin. Let us separate and do according to God’s will.’ I felt that she was right, and I have loaded up an ox with her things and am on my way to take her back home, but I wanted to tell you all about it first.”

The missionary shaded his eyes with his hand, and a few big drops fell on the mat in front of him. He felt for his handkerchief, which did not seem to be there. Mr. Min saw his dilemma and tendered him the use of the long straps of white cotton cloth which secured his outer garments to his person. It was accepted in the same simple spirit in which it was offered, and the tears were wiped away, but still words seemed to fail the missionary. The house was full now of sympathetic friends and neighbours who had mourned over Mr. Min’s downfall and had prayed for his repentance. In the silence that followed the voice of the “chungeun chip” was heard.

“Dear friends,” she said, “you see before you a very grateful woman. I am a poor, filthy creature, yet God has not called me filthy, but has pitied and led me, until to-day through the love of Christ I have been enabled to break through

the net of sin and escape from the place of destruction. If the Lord Jesus can show such wonders of grace to a poor creature like I am, what will he not do for you? Oh, will you not every one of you serve him from henceforth with your whole hearts?"

Prayer followed, and the singing of a hymn, and then the whole company repaired to the doorway to see the little party off. There was the ox loaded up with a bundle of clothes, a comfort, and a pillow, a couple of gourds, a Testament and hymnbook, and food enough in the way of millet and beans to last through the coming winter. All looked on in sympathetic silence while this little Korean Hagar took up her way into the wilderness, trudging along at the ox's heels while Abraham led the way at his head.

It was dinner time now, and Pobai came in with a little round table not a foot high and not much more than a foot in diameter, filled with steaming viands. Kesiki, too, with a heart full of hospitality, came running over with an offering of her own—a bowl full of buckwheat vermicelli in long, slippery strings. Politeness dictated that the missionary should be left to himself to dispose of his meal, but curiosity pleaded for a look at his way of eating. The result was a compromise which cleared the room but left space outside the door and window crowded thick with heads. The soup was soon disposed of. The

missionary tasted it, found it was good, hoped it was not made of dogmeat, and ate it all. Then he attacked the vermicelli.

He had often seen Koreans eating it with their chopsticks, transferring the long shreds from the bowl to their mouths with perfect grace and dexterity, and he had made earnest attempts himself to learn the art by practice both in public and private. Nevertheless his efforts on the present occasion to secure a taste of the elusive dainty were a dismal and ludicrous failure, yet not one discourteous smile revealed the inward merriment which all the beholders felt. After watching him in silence for a few moments, Grandfather Kim came to the relief of his incompetency with a long-handled, flat-bowled brass spoon, and the vermicelli was finally captured with the help of this implement. For the remainder of the meal grandfather sat beside him and personally superintended the transfer of each morsel to the proper receptacle. He tore up the salt fish with his fingers and popped the shreds into the missionary's mouth, and wiped off the brass spoon, when necessary, on the tails of his own coat. Every kindness that his loving old heart could suggest was offered.

More examinations and a wedding occupied the afternoon, and it was eight o'clock at night before the missionary was reminded by the sight of Yung Kyoo's suggestive countenance in the doorway, that an arrangement had been made for

the evening whereby that young gentleman was to have an opportunity to behold the lady of his mother's choice. It was altogether contrary to good custom, and the consent of her natural guardians had been secured with much difficulty. Arriving at the house, which was not far away, they found the room crowded with the lady's relatives, in the midst of whom she sat with downcast eyes, perfectly dumb and motionless. Yung Kyoo took his seat as far away from her as the confines of the room permitted, and as far as the missionary was able to detect, did not once allow his eyes to wander in her direction. Yet when the call was over and they walked away together, in reply to the missionary's question he said with modest assurance that the indications were that there would be affection between them. Just how he had arrived at this conclusion ever continued to be a mystery to the missionary, but I am glad to be able to record that the event proved the correctness of Yung Kyoo's judgment.

Sabbath morning dawned clear and bright. From early morn people began assembling in the new church, and until late at night it was not once entirely clear of worshippers. The whole day was a continual feast for hungry souls. A sunrise prayer meeting, Sabbath school and dedicatory service in the morning; baptisms and the Lord's Supper in the afternoon; a prayer, praise, and testimony service in the evening.

Through it all old Sim Ssi was like a glorified being. When evening came, and all were pouring out their hearts in stirring testimonies to God's saving power, she arose, and in her arms was the Buddha of gilded wood who had been dispossessed of his ancient home. Holding it out to the missionary, she said: "Take this when you go back to visit your people in the Beautiful Country [America]; tell them that from the worship of things like this, and many times worse than this, the gospel has delivered us."

It was late when the meeting broke up and all the farewells were uttered, but the moon was bright and the missionary did not dread the home trip, for his heart sang all the way, and as the congregation scattered to their homes soft snatches of Christian melody revealed the various ways that they took. The homeward path for Pobai and Mansiki lay through fields of summer corn, the long leaves rustling above their heads in the evening breeze. He carried the little blind child on his back, and she led old Grandfather Kim by the hand. High in the heavens sailed the great moon, and Sabbath calm and peace were everywhere.

Pobai's thoughts went back to that other evening years ago in her home village, when her mother had sent her across the town on an errand, and it had seemed to her that the whole world held nothing but wickedness and misery.

She reached forward in the moonlight and touched her husband's garment so gently that he did not perceive it, and murmured something softly to herself, with upturned face.

"All the world is changed now," she said.

THE END

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